

BIBLICAL CREATION VS. QUR'ANIC CREATION

Mohammad Mahmoud Mandurah

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**In the Name of Allah,
The Most Merciful,
The Most Compassionate**

Note

Most of the Biblical references are taken from King James Version (KJV). Some are taken from other versions of the Bible, in which case, the version is identified.

The translation of the Qur'anic verses is mainly taken from: *The Message of Islam*, Translated and Explained by Muhammad Asad (1980).

Other translations of the Qur'an, however, were consulted, in which case, the source is identified. These translations are:

- Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.
- Ali, Ahmed (1988) - *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation*, Princeton Univ. Press.
- Ali, Yusuf (1934) - *The Qur'an Translation*.
- Maududi, S.A. (1972) - *Tafhim-ul-Qur'an*.

Abbreviations

Chron.	Chronicles
Col.	Colossians
Cor.	Corinthians
Dan.	Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Eccles.	Ecclesiastes
Eph.	Ephesians
Ex.	Exodus
Ez.	Ezekiel
Gal.	Galatians
Gen.	Genesis
Hab.	Habakkuk
Heb.	Hebrews
Hos.	Hosea
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Josh.	Joshua
Judg.	Judges
Lam.	Lamentations
Lev.	Leviticus
Mal.	Malachi
Matt.	Matthew
Num.	Numbers
NT	New Testament
OT	Old Testament
PBUH	Peace Be Upon Him
Philip.	Philippians
Prov.	Proverbs
Ps.	Psalms
Rev.	Revelation
Rom.	Romans
Sam.	Samuel
Song.	Song of Solomon

Thess.	Thessalonians
Tim.	Timothy
Zech.	Zechariah
Zeph.	Zephaniah

Other Books by the Author

- *25 Testimonies Against the Bible* (2020).
- *The Morality and Ethics of the Bible and the Qur'an*, Updated & Revised Edition (2021).

Preface

Suppose there is a God. A Creator to this universe, and to everything in the universe: humans, animals, birds, fish, insects, and plants.

How would God tell us about Himself? About His existence? About the purpose of our creation and our existence? What are the proofs to God's existence?

What communication channel would God use considering that the communication tool must be accessible to the masses and it shouldn't be a one-to-one channel?

The answer: It is through scripture. It is the only source that can provide the masses with the answers to the above questions.

But there are many scriptures in existence today. Which one should we accept and adopt?

The answer: There should be a criteria and specifications to the scripture and its contents by which one could evaluate the different scriptures and choose the right one.

The specifications of scripture itself are self-evident. The scripture should be authentic, reliable, free from corruptions, and free from errors.

The specifications of the scripture's content, however, are more elaborate. The content must satisfy the following nine requirements:

- i. It contains sufficient evidence to prove its own divinity and that it is a revelation from God.
- ii. It gives a complete picture about God, the Creator, and His attributes.
- iii. It contains sufficient evidence to the existence of God.
- iv. It clearly tells us the purpose of our creation and existence without any ambiguity.
- v. It gives a detailed account about creation.

- vi. It contains detailed systems of life by which man can live.
- vii. It fulfils and supports universal moral values such as: equality, and justice.
- viii. It must not contradict logic, science, and common sense.
- ix. It must not contradict itself.

At the top of the list of requirements above is that each scripture must include the evidence to its own divinity, authenticity and trustworthiness. The concept of InfoMiracle (Information-Based Miracle) is introduced in the book. There are different types of InfoMiracles. These include: prophecies about future events that become facts, recounting past events accurately, pureness from misinformation, and pureness from errors and contradictions.

The presence of InfoMiracles in a scripture is one proof to the divinity of the scripture. The analysis shows that the Qur'an enjoys a wealth of InfoMiracles. The account of creation in the Qur'an demonstrates a variety of such InfoMiracles.

The purpose of this books is to compare between the creation accounts in the Bible and in the Qur'an. It does not aim to make a thorough evaluation to the two scriptures based on the criteria described above.

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Part I: Creation in the Bible

1- Authorship and Authenticity of the Bible

Who Wrote The Bible? Is the Bible Authentic? Is the Bible reliable?

It may seem odd to raise these questions in a book that discusses creation and cosmology. But the relevance of these questions and their answers stems from the need to answer another important question: Are the accounts of creation in the Bible revealed truth from God, or are they simply human creative writings and a collection of popular myths and legends?

A scripture authority stands on two pillars. The first one is that it acquires its authority from the authority of its author. If the scripture is attested that it was written by one of the great prophets (Abraham, David, Solomon, Moses, Jesus, .. etc.) we can be confident that this scripture contains the revealed words of God. If, on the other hand, there were considerable doubts about the authorship of the scripture, then the scripture loses its authority.

That is the reason why the Church throughout its past history strenuously defended the claim that Moses was the Author of the Torah, and defended the authorships of the other books of the Bible as well. Anybody who dares to question the Bible authorship was considered a heretic, persecuted, excommunicated, prisoned or executed, and his writings banned and/or destroyed.

The second pillar is the authenticity of the scripture. A scripture retains its authority if it can be shown that its authenticity and originality were preserved. If, on the other hand, the scripture was subjected to major corruptions and mutilations as it was transmitted from its source to us, it loses its authority.

The Bible, unfortunately, has major cracks in its both pillars. This chapters reviews the testimonies of some distinguished biblical scholars regarding the two issues at hand: the authorship of the Bible, and its authenticity and reliability.

1.1 The Authorship of the Bible:

One of the earliest scholars who questioned the authorship of the Torah was the distinguished **Abraham ibn Ezra** of the Middle Ages (1089-1164), who was considered one of the pioneers of higher biblical criticism of the Torah.

In his commentary on the Pentateuch, ibn Ezra was troubled by several verses in the Torah that didn't make sense or/and seemed not to be written by Moses but were added to the Torah. These are: Gen. 12:6, Gen. 22:14, Deut. 1:1-5, Deut. 3:11, Deut. 31:9, and Deut. 34:1-12.

In Genesis 12:6, we read:

6. And Abram passed through the land unto the place of Sichem, unto the plain of Moreh. And the Canaanite was then in the land. (Gen. 12:6).

Commenting on the above verse, ibn Ezra wrote:

"... AND THE CANAANITE WAS THEN IN THE LAND. It is possible that the Canaanites seized the land of Canaan from some other tribe at that time. Should this interpretation be incorrect, then there is a secret meaning to the text. Let the one who understands it remain silent."¹

Ibn Ezra's language was veiled and allusive, rather than direct. He didn't expose that 'Moses did not write this verse', and he wrote: "... *there is a secret meaning to the text.*". This reluctance by Ibn Ezra to explicitly tell what he knows probably could be out of reverence for the holy writings.²

Next, commenting on the introductory verses of Deuteronomy, ibn Ezra stated:

"If you can grasp the mystery behind the following problematic passages:

¹ Ibn Ezra's Commentary on the Pentateuch, Genesis (Bereshit), Translated by Strickman & Silver, 1988., p. 151.

² Lancaster, I. (2003) - *Deconstructing the Bible. Abraham ibn Ezra's Introduction to the Torah*, Routledge, p. 7.

- 1) *The final twelve verses of this book [i.e., Deut. 34:1–12, describing the death of Moses],*
- 2) *'Moshe wrote [this song on the same day, and taught it to the children of Israel]' [Deut. 31:22];*
- 3) *'At that time, the Canaanites dwelt in the land' [Gen. 12:6];*
- 4) *'... In the mountain of God, He will appear' [Gen. 22:14];*
- 5) *'behold, his [Og king of Bashan] bed is a bed of iron...' [Deut. 3:11] you will then understand **the truth**."*³

In the above, ibn Ezra again was using an encrypted language ("the truth") to indicate that Moses was not the sole author of the Torah.

It is evident that Moses couldn't be the author of (Deut. 34:1-12) that describe his own death. Ibn Ezra developed what he calls the "secret of the twelve." Since these twelve verses were not written by Moses, then there are other passages that Moses did not write. But, he decided to keep it a secret because most people at his time could not or would not accept this idea.

Next we have **Baruch Spinoza** (1632-1677), a Dutch philosopher of Portuguese Sephardi origin, and one of the early thinkers of the Enlightenment and modern biblical criticism. He developed highly controversial ideas regarding the authenticity of the Hebrew Bible and the nature of the Divine. Jewish religious authorities issued a herem against him, causing him to be effectively expelled and shunned by Jewish society at age 23, including by his own family. His books were later added to the Catholic Church's Index of Forbidden Books.

With more than 500 years separating them, Spinoza considered himself a student of ibn Ezra. He also doubted the authorships of the Bible. In his book *"The Theologico-Political Treatise (1670)"*, he quoted ibn Ezra arguments, and wrote the following:

*"Here are Ibn Ezra's words from his commentary on Deuteronomy:
 "'Beyond the Jordan etc.': If you understand the mystery of the twelve*

³ *The Commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra on the Pentateuch. Volume 5: Deuteronomy, pp. 1-2.*

*and of "Moses wrote the Law" and "the Canaanite was then in the land" and "it will be revealed on the mountain of God" and also "behold his bed, a bed of iron", then you will know **the truth**'. In these few words he discloses and, at the same time, demonstrates that **it was not actually Moses who wrote the Pentateuch but some other person who lived much later, and that the book Moses wrote was a different work.**"⁴*

Spinoza presented his own arguments for doubting the authorship of the Pentateuch, and he concluded the following:

"From all this it is plainer than the noonday sun that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses but by someone else who lived many generations after Moses."⁵

Next, We move forward to the 19th century to look at the testimony of **John William Colenso** (1814-1883). Colenso was a Cornish mathematician and biblical scholar, who was the first Church of England Bishop of Natal. He wrote a book with the title: *"The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined."* The book is composed of five parts with Part I published in 1862, and the other Parts appearing in the following years.

In Part II of his book, Colenso investigates the questions of the real origin, age, and authorship of the different portions of the Pentateuch and other early books of the Bible. The first chapter in this part is entitled: "Signs of Different Authors in the Pentateuch". In this chapter, Colenso examines the Creation accounts and concludes that these accounts were written by two authors⁶.

In Chapter II of Part II, Colenso investigates the case of the Elohist and Jehovistic Writers⁷. He concludes that The book of Genesis bears evidence throughout of being the work of two different writers, one of whom is

⁴ Israel, J. (Ed.) (2007) - *Benedict De Spinoza; Theological-Political Treatise*, 2007, p. 119.

⁵ Ibid, p. 122.

⁶ Colenso, J.W. - *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, Part II, 1863, Ch. I.

⁷ Ibid, Ch. II.

distinguished by the constant use of the word Elohim (translated "God"), and the other by the admixture with it of the name Jehovah (translated "Lord"). The Elohist passages, taken together, form a very tolerably connected whole, only interrupted here and there by a break caused apparently by the Jehovistic writer having removed some part of the Elohist narrative, replacing it, perhaps, by one of his own. Thus there are two contradictory accounts of the creation and of the deluge intermingled.

In Chapter III of Part II, Colenso presents his arguments that the Pentateuch was composed long after Moses's death, and hence it wasn't written by him⁸.

Part III of the book discusses in great detail the authorship of Deuteronomy; when was it written, and by whom?⁹ The main purpose of this volume is to demonstrate that Deuteronomy, and hence the Pentateuch, cannot be written in its entirety by Moses himself.

Next we move the early 20th century to look at the testimony of **Rev. Moses Hull** (1836–1907), who was a minister for the Seventh-day Adventist Church in the 19th century. He wrote a book with the title: *Our Bible: Who Wrote It? When-Where-How? Is It Infallible? A Voice from the Higher Criticism, a Few Thoughts on Other Bibles* (1900).

Hull questions the claim that the Hebrew Bible was direct inspiration from God for it quotes from many books that were never been seen. These include: The Book of Wars of the Lord, the Book of Jasher, the records of Samuel, the records of Nathan, the records of Gad, the Prophecy of Ahijah and the Visions of Iddo.¹⁰

As for the Pentateuch, Moses could not have given these five books their names because "Genesis," "Exodus," "Leviticus," "Deuteronomy," are

⁸ Ibid, Ch. III.

⁹ Colenso, J.W. - The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined, Part III, 1863.

¹⁰ Hull (1900), *Our Bible: Who Wrote It? When-Where-How? Is It Infallible? A Voice from the Higher Criticism, a Few Thoughts on Other Bibles*, pp. 95-96.

Greek words, and “Number” is Latin; two languages that Moses never spoke. And Hull asserts that: “The scholars of the world are now agreed that Moses was not the author of these books.”¹¹

Hull discusses the fact that the creation and the flood stories were composed of two contradictory documents (Jehovistic and Elohist). These stories and similar stories that contradict each other are proofs that they were not written by one writer. He then goes deeper in analyzing each book in the Pentateuch to demonstrate that they could not be written by Moses.

In a similar way, the Books of Exodus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy were analyzed and shown to be written by author(s) other than Moses. The Author quotes many external testimonies to support his conclusions.

In Chapter XXII, Hull gives an answer to the important question: “Is the Bible God’s Revelation?” His answer is the following:

“Whatever the books of the Bible, especially those of the Old Testament, may have been for those for whom they were written, they certainly cannot be a revelation to those living today. At best these books were only primer books, given to an infantile race, and are not adapted to the people of today. The Old Testament was written in languages, which, perhaps, not a person on earth now understands.

I believe that it was Gesenius, the great Hebrew Lexicographer, who said, that if Moses’ books could have been found in the days of Ezra, or Nehemiah, there was not a man in Israel who could have read and understood them.”¹²

“I might here add that the Hebrew people are not the special people with which to entrust a Divine Revelation. They were the most ignorant people, who, in their day made any pretensions to knowledge or civilization.”¹³

¹¹ Ibid, p. 97.

¹² Ibid, p. 387.

¹³ Ibid, p. 392.

Another minister and biblical scholar, **Jabez Thomas Sunderland** (1842-1936), who was a Unitarian minister and reformer, wrote a book titled: *Origin and the Character of the Bible, and Its Place Among Sacred Books*. In this book, we find a chapter, Chapter V, that carries this title: "The Pentateuch: Was It Written by Moses?"¹⁴

Sunderland's answer is a firm "No". He further asserts that the idea that 'Moses was the author of the Pentateuch' is simply a tradition, and a late one at that, having no historic basis.

On the Pentateuch's character and real origin, he summarizes the issues that are settled (at the time of writing his book). These include the following important points:¹⁵

1. That the work is composite.
2. That it is made up in large part of different "documents".
3. That these documents are traceable throughout almost the entire Pentateuch.
4. That those most easily traced and of prime importance are four in number.
5. That Deuteronomy was written earlier (not later, as has been generally supposed) than any other of the five books as we have them.
6. That the Pentateuchal legislation, at least in the elaborate form in which it comes to us, was the last written part of the Pentateuch.

Sunderland tackled also the important question: "Is the Bible infallible?" His conclusion is that the Bible is not infallible because it contains several things that are impossible to reconcile with the theory of Infallibility:¹⁶

1. **The Doctrine of Infallibility not Found in the Bible.** The Bible itself does not claim to be free from error.

¹⁴ Sunderland, J.T. (1924) - *Origin and the Character of the Bible, and Its Place Among Sacred Books*, 6e, The Beacon Press, Ch. V.

¹⁵ Ibid, p. 69.

¹⁶ Ibid, pp. 260-283.

2. **Contradictions in the Bible.** Both Testaments contain numerous contradictions.
3. **Different Forms of the Ten Commandments.** Every careful student of the Bible knows that the Ten Commandments are given not only in three different places in the Old Testament, but in two different forms so different, that one cannot possibly be identified with the other.
4. **Things Absurd.** The Bible contains many things intrinsically absurd.
5. **Historical Mistakes.** The Bible contains accounts and statements not historically correct.
6. **Scientific Errors.**
7. **Exaggerations.** The Bible contains evident exaggerations.
8. **Childish Representations of God.** The Bible contains representations of God which, in the light of such teachings as those of Jesus, we cannot do otherwise than regard as childish.
9. **Morally Degrading Representations of God.** No candid reader of the Bible can deny that it contains representations of God according to which he is not a morally perfect being.
10. **Inculcation of what is Wrong.** There are many places where the Old Testament both directly and indirectly not only sanctions but inculcates what is wrong.

We now fast forward to the present where we find a host of scholars who investigate the authorship of the Bible. The consensus among biblical scholars today is that the Pentateuch was composed by combining four different documents (J, E, P, & D) into one continuous history. On this, **Richard Elliott Friedman**, a biblical scholar and the Ann and Jay Davis Professor of Jewish Studies at the University of Georgia. Rochester, New York, writes the following:

"There was evidence that the Five Books of Moses had been composed by combining four different documents into one continuous history. For working purposes, the four documents were identified by alphabetic symbols. The document that was associated with the divine name Yahweh/Jehovah was called J. The document that was identified as referring to the deity as God (in Hebrew, Elohim) was called E. The third document, by far the largest, included most of the legal sections and concentrated a great deal on matters having to do with priests, and so

*it was called P. And the source that found only in the book of Deuteronomy was called D. The question was now how to uncover the history of these four documents - not only who wrote them, but why four different versions of the story was written, what their relationship to each other was, whether any of the authors were aware of the existence of the others' texts, when in history each was produced, how they were preserved and combined, and a host of other questions."*¹⁷

As to who wrote the four documents, evidence points that the author of J came from Judah and the author of E came from Israel. The author of E was certainly a male who lived in the time frame between 848 and 722 B.C.. The author of J, on the other hand, might be a woman who lived in the time frame between 922 to 722 B.C.¹⁸

Evidence also points that the author of D is the prophet Jeremiah.¹⁹

As to the author of P, he was a male from Judah, almost certainly from Jerusalem. He was one of the Aaronid priesthood or their spokesman.²⁰

And finally, it was Ezra who emerges as the most likely person who combined the different documents and produced the Five Books of the Pentateuch. It was not Moses.²¹

Last, we look at the testimony of **Bart D. Ehrman**, an American New Testament scholar, in his book: *'Forged. Writing in the Name of God. Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are.'*²²

Ehrman analyses each book in the New Testament, and gives his opinion regarding its authorship. On the Gospel of Peter, after detailed analysis,

¹⁷ Friedman, R.E. (2011) - *Who Wrote the Bible*, 2e, p. 31.

¹⁸ Ibid, pp. 120-121.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 210.

²⁰ Ibid, p. 304.

²¹ Ibid, p. 308.

²² Ehrman, B.D. (2011) - *Forged. Writing in the Name of God. Why the Bible's Authors Are Not Who We Think They Are*, HarperCollins.

Ehrman concludes that: *"Peter didn't write it. This is a forgery in the name of Peter."*²³

On the authorship of the Epistle of Peter, he writes: *"The author forged the letter in Peter's name ..."*²⁴

On the Apocalypse of Peter, he writes: *"... Here again we have a forgery in the name of Peter..."*²⁵

On 1 Peter and 2 Peter, he concludes: *"...there are solid reasons for thinking that Peter did not write either one."*²⁶

On 3 Corinthians, he writes: *"... this is an instance in which a forger claiming to be Paul represents a point of view that is contrary to Paul's, even though he is trying to correct, in Paul's name, teachings he thinks are false."*²⁷

The Pastoral Letters (1 Timothy, 2 Timothy & Titus) were written by the same person, and this person was not Paul.

On 2 Thessalonians, Ehrman concludes: *"Paul probably did not write 2 Thessalonians..."*²⁸

On Ephesians, he writes: *"... This book was apparently written by a later Christian in one of Paul's churches who wanted to deal with a big issue of his own day: the relation of Jews and Gentiles in the church. He did so by claiming to be Paul, knowing full well that he wasn't Paul. He accomplished his goal, that is, by producing a forgery."*²⁹

On Colossians, he writes: *"What we have here, then, is another instance in which a later follower of Paul was concerned to address a situation in his own day*

²³ Ibid, p. 71.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 74.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 77.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 77.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 103.

²⁸ Ibid, p. 122.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 127.

and did so by assuming the mantle and taking the name of Paul, forging a letter in his name. "³⁰

On the Book of Jude, he writes: *"But it is almost certain that the historical Jude did not write this book."*³¹

On the Book of James, Ehrman concludes that James could not be the author of this book because he was an illiterate Aramaic-speaking Jew and the book was written in Greek.

On the Acts of the Apostles, he concludes that the book was not written by a companion of Paul, because it was written around 85 CE or so, over two decades after Paul's death.

So, in the above, we have the opinions of seven distinguished scholars who represent the full spectrum of Judeo-Christianity: a Jewish scholar (ibn Ezra), a Jewish philosopher (Spinoza), a Catholic Bishop (Colenso), a Protestant minister (Hull), a Unitarian minister (Sunderland), and two modern biblical scholars (Friedman and Ehrman). They all reach the same conclusion that most of the books in the Bible were not written by those who were claimed to be their authors, and, in particular, Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch.

1.2 The Authenticity and Reliability of the Bible:

Not only the Bible has major doubts about its authorship, but, it suffered major corruptions and mutilations as it was transmitted to reach us in its current form.

One of the earliest scholars who investigated the corruption of the Bible was **Sir Isaac Newton**. Newton was not only a distinguished physicist and scientist, but, he also had a great interest in religion and theology.

³⁰ Ibid, p. 129.

³¹ Ibid, p. 209.

One of his contributions in the field of religion and theology is a dissertation titled: "*An Historical Account of Two Corruptions of Scripture*," This dissertation was sent in a letter to John Locke on 14 November 1690. The text of the letter was first published in English in 1754, 27 years after Newton's death. There are several books that discuss this letter^{32, 33}.

The first corruption exposed by Newton in his dissertation was regarding the verse: (1 John 5:7), which says:

For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one. (1 John 5:7).

Regarding the above verse, Newton presented detailed arguments to prove that the words "*in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one*", that support the Trinity doctrine, did not appear in the original Greek Scriptures, but was added to the Latin version intentionally at a later date. Newton also points the fingers to Jerome as the one who made this falsification.

The other corruption that Newton investigated is in (1 Timothy 3:16):

And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory. (1 Tim. 3:16).

Regarding the above verse, Newton argued that, by a small alteration in the Greek text, the word "God" was substituted to make the phrase read "God was manifest in the flesh" instead of "which was manifested in the flesh". He attempted to demonstrate that early Church writers in referring to the verse knew nothing of such an alteration.³⁴

³² In *A Collection of Essays and Tracts in Theology, from Various Authors, with Biographical and Critical Notices*, by Jared Sparks, No. IV, Vol. 2, Part 2, 1823, pp. 235-320.

³³ In *The Correspondence of Isaac Newton*, ed. H. W. Turnbull (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1961), Vol. 3, pp. 83-146.

³⁴ Ibid, Section II, p. 291.

In the previous section, we reviewed the testimony of **John William Colenso** (1814-1883), the Church of England Bishop of Natal, regarding the authorship of the Bible. In his book, *"The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined,"* he discussed several problematic issues that indicate that the Bible suffered considerable corruption and mutilation³⁵. In the following, we look at some of these issues.

The Family of Judah³⁶:

Colenso discussed a collection of events in Judah's family that were impossible to take place as was mentioned in Genesis, Ch. 38. Judah was forty-two years old when he went down with Jacob into Egypt, being three years older than his brother Joseph, who was then thirty-nine. And from that time nine years elapsed (seven of plenty and two of famine) before Jacob came down into Egypt. In these forty-two years of Judah's life the following events were recorded:

He grows up, marries, and has three sons. The eldest (Er) grows up, marries Tamar, and dies. The second son (Onan) marries his brother's widow and dies. The third son (Shelah), after waiting to grow to maturity, declines to marry the widow. Tamar then deceives Judah himself, slept with him, and bears him twins—Pharez and Zarah. One of these twins grows up and has two sons—Hezron and Hamul—born to him... All these events took place before Jacob goes down into Egypt.

The Institution of the Passover³⁷:

The whole population of Israel were instructed in one single day to keep the Passover, and actually did keep it. After midnight of the same day in which Moses received the command, the Israelites received notice to start for the wilderness. No one was to go out of his house till morning, when they were to take their hurried flight with their cattle and herds. How could 2,000,000 people, scattered about over a wide district as they must have been with their cattle and herds, have gotten ready and taken a simultaneous hurried flight at twelve hours' notice?

³⁵ Colenso, J.W. (1862) - *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua Critically Examined*, Part I.

³⁶ Ibid, Part I, Ch. II.

³⁷ Ibid, Part I, Ch. X.

The March Out of Egypt³⁸:

The Israelites, with their flocks and herds, reached the Red Sea, walking fifty to sixty miles over a sandy desert in three days! Upon what did these two million of sheep and oxen feed in the journey to the Red Sea over a desert region, sandy, gravelly, and stony alternately? How did the people manage with the sick and infirm, and especially with the 750 births that must have taken place in the three days' march?

The Number of Israelites at the Time of the Exodus³⁹:

The number of the children of Israel who went into Egypt was 70. They sojourned in Egypt 215 years. How could these people have increased in 215 years from 70 souls to number 600,000 warriors? It would have required an average number of 46 children to each father. The 12 sons of Jacob had between them only 53 sons. At this rate of increase, in the fourth generation there would have been only 6,311 males, provided they were all living at the time of the exodus, instead of 1,000,000. If we add the fifth generation, who would be mostly children, the total number of males would not have exceeded 28,465.

Another scholar who studied the corruption of the Bible is **John William Burgon** (1813-1888). He was an English Anglican divine who became the Dean of Chichester Cathedral in 1876.

Concerning the corruptions in the Bible, Burgon classified these corruptions into two classes: accidental corruptions and intentional corruptions. There are 5 types of accidental corruptions:

- “(1) those which were involved in pure Accident, or*
- (2) in what is termed Homoeoteleuton where lines or sentences ended with the same word or the same syllable, or*
- (3) such as arose in writing from Uncial letters, or*
- (4) in the confusion of vowels and diphthongs which is called Itacism, or*
- (5) in Liturgical Influence.”*

³⁸ Ibid, Part I, Ch. XI.

³⁹ Ibid, Part I, Ch. XVII

And there are 10 types of intentional corruptions:

- " (1) *Harmonistic Influence,*
- (2) *Assimilation,*
- (3) *Attraction; such instances too in their main character were*
- (4) *Omissions,*
- (5) *Transpositions,*
- (6) *Substitutions,*
- (7) *Additions,*
- (8) *Glosses,*
- (9) *Corruption by Heretics,*
- (10) *Corruption by Orthodox."*⁴⁰.

Burgon, discussed the Corruption by Heretics.⁴¹ Being an Anglican, he went on and named some of the heretics (according to him) who participated in the deliberate corruption of the NT:

".. the heresiarchs Basilides, Valentinus, and Marcion."⁴²

He also named several Orthodox scholars whom he accused of corrupting the Bible: *Beza, Theodotus (of Byzantium), & Photinus.*

Since we have looked into the testimony of an Anglican scholar, it will be useful to look into a testimony from a Protestant scholar. One such scholar is **Thomas Hartwell Horne** (1780-1862), an English Theologian and Librarian. He wrote a book titled: "*Popery, the Enemy and the Falsifier of Scripture, or, Facts and Evidences, Illustrative of the Conduct of the Modern Church of Rome in Prohibiting the Reading and Circulation of the Holy Scriptures in the Vulgar Tongue*", that was published in 1844.

He started this book by denouncing the Papacy and the Church of Rome efforts to suppress the circulation of the Bible.⁴³ Then, he proceeded to

⁴⁰ Burgon, J.W. (1896) - *The Causes of the Corruption of the Traditional Text of the Holy Gospels*, pp. 8-9.

⁴¹ Ibid, pp. 191-192.

⁴² Ibid, p. 197.

⁴³ Horne, T.H. (1844) - *Popery, the Enemy and the Falsifier of Scripture, ...,* p. 10.

expose the Papacy and Church of Rome efforts to falsify the Bible and promote a corrupted version of it, *the Sixtine* and *the Clemintine* editions.

The Sixtine Bible (as it is commonly termed), was published at Rome in 1590. In a bull prefixed to it, Sixtus V. declared that this edition should, without hesitation, be deemed and taken for that which the Council of Trent, in its fourth session, had pronounced to be authentic ; and ordained that it should be adopted throughout the Romish Church.

But the Sixtine Bible was discovered to be so exceedingly incorrect, that his successor, Gregory XIV., caused it to be suppressed: and Clement VIII., who succeeded Gregory in the pontificate, published another authentic edition of the Vulgate, called from him the Clementine edition. Burgon then brings in an external testimony that asserts that there were not fewer than two thousand additions, omissions, contradictions, and other differences between the Sixtine and Clementine editions.⁴⁴

Finally, we fast forward to look at the testimony of **Bart D. Ehrman**, an American New Testament scholar focusing on textual criticism of the New Testament, in his book: *"The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the NT."*⁴⁵

The author examines four types of corruptions of scripture:

- Anti-Adoptionistic Corruptions of Scripture,
- Anti-Separationist Corruptions of Scripture,
- Anti-Docetic Corruptions of Scripture, and
- Anti-Patristic Corruptions of Scripture.

Due to the existence of a multitude of Christological views, and considering that the books of the emerging Christian Scriptures were circulating in manuscript form, the texts of these books were by no means inviolable; to the contrary, they were altered with relative ease and alarming frequency. Most of the changes were accidental, the result of

⁴⁴ Ibid, p. 31.

⁴⁵ Ehrman, B.D. (1993) - *The Orthodox Corruption of Scripture. The Effect of Early Christological Controversies on the Text of the NT*, Oxford Univ. Press.

scribal ineptitude, carelessness, or fatigue. Others were intentional and reflect the controversial milieu within which they were produced.⁴⁶

The Author asserts in his conclusions that the findings of his research reinforced the notion that theologically motivated changes of the text are to be anticipated particularly during the early centuries of transmission. Also, the instability of the text in the early centuries is equaled by the instability of the scribes.⁴⁷

1.3 Conclusion:

The review of the testimonies of several distinguished biblical scholars in this chapter shows that the Bible is not infallible and it is not inerrant for the following reasons:

1. Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch.
2. The Bible is composed of several documents whose authors are anonymous.
3. The Bible suffered considerable corruptions, mutilations, additions and omissions as it was transmitted to us.
4. Both Testaments contain numerous contradictions and errors.
5. The Bible contains accounts and statements not historically correct, and many things intrinsically absurd.

Based on the above, the divinity, infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible should not be a factor in examining the Creation accounts in the Bible. These accounts should be evaluated based on their own merits and whether they conform to logic and scientific findings.

⁴⁶ Ibid, p. 275.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 277.

2- The Stories of the Creation:

There are two accounts of creation in Genesis: the Elohistic Story, which was based on the E source, and the Yahwist Story, which was based on the J source.

2.1 *The Elohistic Story of Creation:*

The first account of creation is from Gen. 1:1 to Gen. 2:4a, and it was based on the E source in which the author used the term “Elohim” for the deity. This term in Hebrew is plural and should have been translated into ‘the gods’, but the English Bibles translated it into “God”. This account is often called the Elohistic story. And here how the Bible tells us this story.

Genesis 1.

1. *In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.*
2. *And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*
3. *And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.*
4. *And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.*
5. *And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*
6. *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.*
7. *And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.*
8. *And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.*
9. *And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.*
10. *And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.*

11. *And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.*

12. *And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

13. *And the evening and the morning were the third day.*

14. *And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:*

15. *And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.*

16. *And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.*

17. *And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,*

18. *And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.*

19. *And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

20. *And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.*

21. *And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

22. *And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.*

23. *And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*

24. *And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.*

25. *And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

26. *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.*

27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28. And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29. And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

30. And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

31. And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 2.

1. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

2. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

3. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

4. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, ...

2.2 The Problems with the Elohist Story:

According to this story, this is the order of creation that took place over six days:

- Day 1 - Light, Day and Night.
- Day 2 - Water and Sky.
- Day 3 - Land, Sea and Vegetation.
- Day 4 - Sun, Moon and Stars.
- Day 5 - Fish and Birds.
- Day 6 - Animals and Humans (male and female.)
- Day 7 - God rested from all the work of creating.

There are many problems in the details of the Elohist account of creation:

1. Light, Day and Night are created on Day 1, and the story talks about evenings and mornings starting from Day 1. But the Sun is created on Day 4, and there can't be evenings and mornings in the previous three days.
2. The separation of light from darkness is repeated twice: the first in Gen. 1:4 on Day 1, and the second in Gen. 1:18 on Day 4.
3. In both of the accounts in (2) above, light was miraculously separated from darkness. It seems that the author of these accounts was unaware that the day and night on Earth are the result of the revolving motion of the Earth along its axis.
4. In Gen. 1:7, the water that is the source of rain was miraculously separated from the water that form the seas and the oceans, and it was kept above the sky by a solid barrier. The author of this verse seems to be unaware that clouds and rain are the result of water evaporation from oceans, seas, rivers and lakes.
5. Vegetation is created on Day 3 while the sun is created afterwards on Day 4. This shouldn't be a problem if what separates the two creations is one 24-hour day. But some claim that a creation day is not a typical 24-hour day, but a period of time that could be measured in thousands or millions of years. In such a case, the vegetation from Day 3 wouldn't survive without the light from the sun that was not created yet.
6. In Gen. 1:27, a male and a female were created as the ancestors of the human race; which is logical. But the author of the Creation story forgot to mention that a male and a female of every other creature is needed for them to reproduce and multiply.
7. In Gen 1:10,12,18,21,25&31, we read that God marvels at His own creation "... *it was very good.*" But, as we shall see in the story of the universal Noachian flood (Gen. 6 & 7), that this initial creation was not good, and the human race for the next 1656 years after Adam will be corrupt and wicked, and that they have to be destroyed, and that God has start over the creation again.

8. The creation days are 24-hour days; each day contains a morning and an evening. This means that everything, the heavens, the earth, vegetation, animals, and humans were created almost simultaneously (within days of each other). In other words, they all have the same age. (forget about the universe being 14 billion years old, the earth being 4.5 billion years old, and human life being 8 million years old.)
9. An omnipotent god got tired and needed rest in the seventh day.

2.3 The Yahwist Story of Creation:

The second account of creation starts in Gen. 2:4b to the end of Chapter 2, and it was based on the J source. In this account, the author used the term: "Yahweh" as a name of God. It is translated in the English Bibles into "Lord God." This account is often called the Jahwist or Yahwist story.

Chapter 2.

4. ..., in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens,
5. And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew: for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground.
6. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
7. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
8. And the Lord God planted a garden eastward in Eden; and there he put the man whom he had formed.
9. And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
10. And a river went out of Eden to water the garden; and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.
11. The name of the first is Pison: that is it which compasseth the whole land of Havilah, where there is gold;
12. And the gold of that land is good: there is bdellium and the onyx stone.

13. *And the name of the second river is Gihon: the same is it that compasseth the whole land of Ethiopia.*
14. *And the name of the third river is Hiddekel: that is it which goeth toward the east of Assyria. And the fourth river is Euphrates.*
15. *And the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.*
16. *And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat:*
17. *But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*
18. *And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*
19. *And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*
20. *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.*
21. *And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;*
22. *And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*
23. *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*
24. *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*
25. *And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.*

2.4 The Problems with the Yahwist Story:

We have seen before that the Elohist story of creation extends over 35 verses (31 verses in Ch. 1, and 4 verses in Ch. 2). The Yahwist story is a concise one for it extends over 23 verses only even though it describes additional creation activities that include:

- Creation of the Garden of Eden.

- Creation of four named rivers: Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel, and Euphrates, and the description of their locations and flow directions.
- Creation of the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, and the command to Adam not to eat from it.
- The surgical creation of Eve from Adam's rib.

There are many problems in the details of the Yahwist account of creation:

1. Verse 2:5 tells us that in the beginning there was no water '*... Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth...*'. Then, Verse 2:6 tells us that '*... there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.*' How this mist was formed from earth if there was no water on earth?
2. Verse 2:6 seems to allude that clouds were formed by the mist rising from land. This contradicts science for we know now that clouds are formed as a result of water evaporation from oceans, seas, rivers and lakes.
3. Only 4 middle eastern rivers are mentioned in the story. These rivers, measured by the amount of their water, are considered small and minor. The story seemed to forget the existence of the Amazon river which is 100 times bigger than the Nile in terms of water flow. It also forgot the Congo river in Africa, and the other major rivers in the world such as: the Ganges river, the Orinoco and Madeira rivers in South America, and the Yangtze river in China.
4. The command not to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil in Verse 2:17 was given to Adam only for Eve was not created yet. There is no mention anywhere that, after the creation of Eve, she was also instructed not to eat from that tree.
5. Verse 2:17 tells us that God lied to Adam by saying: '*... in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*' We know that Adam and Eve ate from the tree and did not die.

6. The mention of gold, bdellium, and onyx stone is odd and out of context while we are still in the middle of creation, and the animals and the woman are still to be created. At that moment, a loaf of bread or a basket of fruits were probably more valuable and beneficial to Adam than any piece of gold, bdellium or onyx stone.
7. Verses 2:21-22 tell us that, in order to create the Woman, God had to come down and operate on Adam, give him anesthesia, open his body, take a rib, close the body, and make a Woman from the rib. Apparently, God is not Omnipotent in this version of the Creation. Had He been Omnipotent, He could have stayed above in the heavens and just said the word "Be" and the Woman will.
8. And there are many contradictions between the Yahwist and Elohist stories as is discussed in the following section.

2.5 Contradiction of the Two Stories:

The two accounts of creation, the Elohist and the Yahwist stories, contradict each other in the order of creation and in the details of the creation. Colenso summarizes some of these contradictions in the following:⁴⁸

"The following are the most noticeable points of difference between the two cosmogonies.

(i) In the first, the earth emerges from the waters, and is, therefore, saturated with moisture, Gen. 1:9,10. In the second, the 'whole face of the ground' requires to be moistened, Gen. 2:6.

(ii) In the first, the birds and beasts are created before man, Gen. 1:20,24,26. In the second, man is created before the birds and beasts, Gen. 2:7,19.

(iii) In the first, all 'fowls that fly' are made out of the waters, Gen. 1:20. In the second, the 'fowls of the air' are made out of the ground, Gen. 2:19.

(iv) In the first, man is created in the image of God, Gen. 1:27. In the second, man is made of the dust of the ground, and merely animated with the breath of

⁴⁸ Colenso (1863) - *The Pentateuch and Book of Joshua ...*, Part 2, pp 171-172.

life; and it is only after his eating the forbidden fruit that 'the Lord God said. Behold, the man has become as one of us, to know good and evil,' Gen. 2:7, 3:22.

(v) *In the first, man is made the lord of the whole earth, Gen. 1:28. In the second, he is merely placed in the garden of Eden, 'to dress it and to keep it,' Gen. 2:8,15.*

(vi) *In the first, man and woman are created together, as the closing and completing work of the whole Creation, — created also, as is evidently implied, in the same kind of way, to be the complement of one another; and, thus created, they are blessed together, Gen. 1:28.*

In the second, the beasts and birds are created between the man and the woman. First, the man is made, of the dust of the ground; he is placed by himself in the garden, charged with a solemn command, and threatened with a curse if he breaks it; then the beasts and the birds are made, and the man gives names to them; and, lastly, after all this, the woman is made, out of one of his ribs, but merely as a helpmate for the man. Gen. 2:7,8,15,22."

Another scholar, Remsburg, adds more contradictions to the list above:⁴⁹ [Note: I added a numbering to the list below to be a continuation to the numbering of the list above.]

[vii] *In the first cosmogony the appellation of Deity is uniformly "Elohim" (the gods), translated "God." This term occurs thirty-five times.*

In the second, the appellation of Deity is uniformly "Jehovah (Yahweh) Elohim," translated "Lord God." This term occurs eleven times.

The first belongs to the Priestly code, the second to the Jehovistic document. They represent different schools of Jewish thought and different periods of Jewish history.

...

[viii] *In the first, plants are created from the earth — are a product of the earth. "And the earth brought forth grass and herb" (Gen. 1:12).*

In the second, they are created independent of the earth — are created by God and then transferred to earth. "The Lord God made the earth and the heavens, and every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and every herb of the field before it grew" (Gen. 2:4,5).

...

⁴⁹ Remsburg, J.E. (1907) - *The Bible; Authenticity. Credibility. Morality.* pp 181-187.

[ix] *In the first, God, from his throne in heaven, speaks earth's creation into being. "God said, Let the earth bring forth, . . . and it was so."*

In the second, God comes down on earth, plants a garden, molds man out of clay, breathes in his nostrils, makes woman out of a rib, makes birds and animals as a child makes mud pies, and brings them to Adam to see what he will call them.

...

[x] *In the first, "God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament" (Gen. 1:7). When moisture was needed "the windows of heaven were opened" and water discharged from the reservoir above. When enough was discharged "the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained" (Gen. 8:2).*

In the second, when moisture was needed, "There went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground" (Gen. 2:6).

...

[xi] *Both cosmogonies are theological rather than scientific. The real purpose of the first, in its present form at least, is not so much to explain the creation of the universe as to inculcate a belief in the divine institution of the Sabbath. It belongs to the Priestly code, and one of the chief pillars of priestcraft is the Sabbath.*

The second contains no recognition of the Sabbath. The chief purpose of this account of the creation, if we include the third chapter, which is really a continuation of it, is to establish the doctrine of the Fall of Man.

...

[xii] *According to the first the Creator is an optimist. He views all his works and declares them "good."*

According to the second the Creator is a pessimist. He sees in his works both "good and evil;" the good continuing to diminish, and the evil continuing to increase."

Finally, could the six days of creation be six periods and not six 24-hour days?

We have to read Exodus 20:8-11 to answer this question:

8. *Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

9. *Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*

10. But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Ex. 20:8-11).

The above verses are God's own commentary on Genesis 1. Here, God tells the Israelites to work six days and rest on the seventh because He created in six days and ceased creating on the seventh. The commandment makes no sense if the days are not literal in verse 11 as they are in verses 8-10.

So, the six days of creation are not six periods, they are definitely six 24-hour days.

3- Story of the Fall and Noachian Deluge:

3.1 *The Account of the Fall:*

The whole of Chapter 3 in Genesis is dedicated to the story of the Fall. This story has special importance in Christianity for it is the basis of the doctrine of Original Sin. Here how the story goes:

Genesis 3.

1. *Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You must not eat from any tree in the garden'?"*
2. *The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat fruit from the trees in the garden,*
3. *but God did say, 'You must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden, and you must not touch it, or you will die.'"*
4. *"You will not certainly die," the serpent said to the woman.*
5. *"For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."*
6. *When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree was good for food and pleasing to the eye, and also desirable for gaining wisdom, she took some and ate it. She also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it.*
7. *Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.*
8. *Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden.*
9. *But the Lord God called to the man, "Where are you?"*
10. *He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*
11. *And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*
12. *The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it."*
13. *Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this you have done?"*

The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate."

14. *So the Lord God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.*

15. *And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

16. *To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

17. *To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life.*

18. *It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.*

19. *By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*

20. *Adam named his wife Eve, because she would become the mother of all the living.*

21. *The Lord God made garments of skin for Adam and his wife and clothed them.*

22. *And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever."*

23. *So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken.*

24. *After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life.*

3.2 The Problems with the Fall Story:

The Fall story has many logical and moral problems:

1. The concept that the forbidden tree was 'the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil' does not make sense. How the acquisition of

knowledge is considered wrong? Actually, man is required to know what is good to follow it or do it, and what is evil to avoid it. So, it does not make sense to forbid Adam from eating from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil.

2. Eating from a certain special tree may cause physical changes in the body; it could improve man's health and increase his life expectancy; it could increase certain hormones and thus enhance certain desires and feelings. But for this action to increase someone's knowledge is an indication that the story is a myth.
3. The talking serpent in the story is another indication that the story is just a myth.
4. The story portrays the serpent, representing the devil, more honest and truthful than God when it said in Verse 3:4: *"You will not certainly die."*
5. The story portrays Adam as a weak and passive creature. He was with Eve when the serpent was talking to her and tempting her. He didn't say a word, didn't remind her that it was forbidden to eat from the tree, and didn't prevent her from committing a sin that would cause calamitous consequences on the human race.
6. Adam was further portrayed as a sissy sheep when he disobeyed his God, followed his wife, and ate the fruit handed to him without hesitation.
7. The conversation between God and Adam in Verses 3:8-13 has the appearance of a conversation between two humans. It does not reflect the image of an Omniscient, All-Knowing, All-Seeing, and All-Cognizant God.
8. Verse 3:12 portrays Adam as a selfish, coward creature. He put all the blame on Eve for eating from the forbidden tree, and deflected the blame from himself.

9. The serpent is cursed in Verse 3:14 for what it did. This raises the question: did the serpent act on its own, or was it the devil in the form of a serpent? If it acted on its own, what motivated it to act this way? It was one of the creatures that God just recently created, and described by Him to be 'good'. If it was the devil, then it shouldn't be cursed, it is the devil that should be cursed.
10. Verse 3:16 tells us that part of the punishment inflicted on Eve (and all women) for her sin is to suffer severe pain during pregnancy and delivery. This is a naïve punishment because not all women get pregnant and have children, and nowadays there is a special injection that removes the pain of delivery.
11. Verses 3:17 and 3:23 tell us that part of the punishment inflicted on Adam (and all men) for his sin is to suffer hardship in producing food for himself from the ground (preparation of the soil, sowing, irrigation, harvesting, ...etc.) This is a naïve punishment. Nowadays, less than 3% of the workforce work in agriculture, and they use advanced machinery in their jobs. There is no more suffering in agriculture.
12. Verse 3:22 has an intriguing phrase: '*The man has now become like one of us, ...*' Here, we have the Lord God speaking to a group of gods, or a Council of gods, saying *man become like one of us*. This is a clear evidence that the author of this story copied a polytheistic mythology and forgot to modify it to conform with the monotheistic Jewish tradition.
13. The Fall story is a manifestation of a recurring pattern of prejudice and gender bias against women in the Bible in which they were blamed in all moral situations that involve the two sexes. We see it in the story of Lot and his two daughters (Gen. 19:30-38) in which, the two daughters were accused of seducing their father, Lot, to commit incest with them. We see it in the story of Tamar and her father in law, Judah, (Gen. 38:15-18), where she was accused of covering her face, acting like a prostitute, and seducing Judah to sleep with her. And we see it in the story of Rebekah in which she deceived her husband, Isaac, to

secure his blessing to her son, Jacob, instead of to his older son Esau (Gen. 27:6-17).

14. The Fall from the Garden is the basis of the Christian doctrine of Original Sin. It is the belief that humanity is in a state of sin since the Fall; or automatic guilt of all humans through collective guilt.⁵⁰ This doctrine is morally troubling for the following reasons:
 - i. Under this doctrine, Adam's sin was handed down to his posterity from parents to children. Even innocent newborns are tainted by the Original Sin; they are born depraved and require baptism to save them. That is why many Christians baptize their young as soon as possible. Augustine emphatically declared it impossible for man to receive eternal salvation any other way.
 - ii. It is a generational punishment and punishing someone for a crime committed by someone else. Here, we have all of humanity being punished, not for crimes they committed, but for a sin committed by Adam and Eve.
 - iii. It is against the nature and attributes of a Just, Merciful, Compassionate, and Forgiving God.
 - iv. It seems that one of the objectives of the doctrine of the Original Sin is to guarantee the continuous control of the Church over its followers. Forgiveness of sins and distribution of indulgences became an industry that generates huge income to the Church.⁵¹

3.3 The Noachian Flood:

The story of Noah's flood in the Bible is probably the most morally disturbing story of all times. This story tells us that God made a big mistake by creating the human beings. He discovered that they are wicked. So, He decided to start again. But first He must destroy all forms of life on earth

⁵⁰ Boyce, J. (2014) - *Born Bad. Original Sin and the Making of the Western World*, Black Inc.

⁵¹ Ibid, Ch. 5.

except the few humans and animals who were put on the ark. To do that He sent a universal flood that covered the whole earth; it covered even the highest mountains on earth. Nothing survived. Except those who were on the ark, everything drowned: men, women, children, animals of all species. The Bible tells us that a genocide of unprecedented scale was committed in which millions of people and perhaps billions of animals were killed. So, let us read what the Bible says about this genocide:

5. And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

6. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart.

7. And the Lord said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them. (Gen. 6:5-7).

11. The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence.

12. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14. Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

15. And this is the fashion which thou shalt make it of: The length of the ark shall be three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits.

16. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; with lower, second, and third stories shalt thou make it.

17. And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die.

18. But with thee will I establish my covenant; and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee.

19. *And of every living thing of all flesh, two of every sort shalt thou bring into the ark, to keep them alive with thee; they shall be male and female.*

20. *Of fowls after their kind, and of cattle after their kind, of every creeping thing of the earth after his kind, two of every sort shall come unto thee, to keep them alive.*

21. *And take thou unto thee of all food that is eaten, and thou shalt gather it to thee; and it shall be for food for thee, and for them. (Gen. 6:11-21)*

2. *Of every clean beast thou shalt take to thee by sevens, the male and his female: and of beasts that are not clean by two, the male and his female.*

3. *Of fowls also of the air by sevens, the male and the female; to keep seed alive upon the face of all the earth.*

4. *For yet seven days, and I will cause it to rain upon the earth forty days and forty nights; and every living substance that I have made will I destroy from off the face of the earth. (Gen. 7:2-4)*

17. *And the flood was forty days upon the earth; and the waters increased, and bare up the ark, and it was lift up above the earth.*

18. *And the waters prevailed, and were increased greatly upon the earth; and the ark went upon the face of the waters.*

19. *And the waters prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered.*

20. *Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.*

21. *And all flesh died that moved upon the earth, both of fowl, and of cattle, and of beast, and of every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth, and every man:*

22. *All in whose nostrils was the breath of life, of all that was in the dry land, died.*

23. *And every living substance was destroyed which was upon the face of the ground, both man, and cattle, and the creeping things, and the fowl of the heaven; and they were destroyed from the earth: and Noah only remained alive, and they that were with him in the ark.*

24. *And the waters prevailed upon the earth an hundred and fifty days. (Gen. 7:17-24)*

The above account does not tell us when this universal flood happened. The Bible, however, contains many chronological data about the timing of certain events and genealogies and ages of some of the characters mentioned in the Bible. From this data, the Young-Earth creationists were able to estimate that the universe was created in year 4004 B.C. (i.e. the age of the universe is 6024 years old)⁵², and that Noah's Flood happened in year 2304 B.C. (i.e. before 4324 years.)⁵³

3.4 The Problems with a Universal Noachian Flood:

There is a large amount of scientific literature from different fields (archaeology, geology, hydrology, geophysics, paleontology, evolution science, zoology, etc.) that examine the Biblical account of a universal flood happening about 4300 years ago. The general consensus is that a universal flood as described in the Bible is a scientific impossibility; it is rejected on moral, rational, or/and scientific grounds. In the following we look briefly at some of the difficulties in the biblical version of the Noachian Flood.^{54,55,56,57,58,59} A more detailed analysis would require too much space.

1. It is unknown how many people were living on earth at the time of Noah. There are varying estimates. According to the genealogy

⁵² See for example: <https://answersingenesis.org/astronomy/the-age-of-the-universe-part-1/>

⁵³ See for example: <https://creation.com/the-date-of-noahs-flood>

⁵⁴ Hill, C.A. (2002) - "The Noachian Flood. Universal or Local", *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 54(3), pp. 170-183.

⁵⁵ Yanko-Hombach, Valentina et al (2007) - "Controversy over the great flood hypotheses in the Black Sea in light of geological, paleontological, and archaeological evidence", *Quaternary International* 167–168, pp. 91–113.

⁵⁶ Hill, C.A. & S.O. Moshier (2009) - "Flood Geology and the Grand Canyon. A Critique", *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*, 61(2), pp. 99-115.

⁵⁷ Collins, Lorence (2009) - "Yes, Noah's Flood may have happened but not over the whole earth.", *Reports*, 29(5), pp. 38-40.

⁵⁸ Senter, P. (2011) - "The Defeat of Flood Geology by Flood Geology", *Reports NCSE*, 31.3, 1.3, May-June 2011.

⁵⁹ Ranney, W. (2012) - *Carving Grand Canyon. Evidence, Theories, and Mystery*, Grand Canyon Association, 2e.

in Gen. 5 and that the flood happened when Noah was 600 years old, there was 1656 years between Adam and Noah flood. A reasonable estimate puts the number of people living on earth at the time of the flood in tens of millions, probably, 20-50 millions. The question is: how could all these tens of millions of people be corrupt and wicked, and need to be eliminated except of eight persons who were saved on the ark? We are talking here about a failure rate in creation of 100%.

2. How was it possible that an Omniscient, Masterful, All-Wise, All-Knowing and All-Cognizant God make a mistake and create a species that would all (except 8) become wicked later on? Couldn't He foretell what will happen in the future and correct it before it happens? A child tossing a coin many times and trying to predict whether he gets a head or a tail has a 50% chance to be correct. How Could an Omniscient God fail 100%?
3. The whole purpose of the universal flood was to replace the wicked people on earth with better ones. But as we read through the rest of Genesis and the other books in the Bible we see considerable amount of wickedness and evil: idol-worshipping, murders, wars, blood baths, genocide, rapes, incest, lies and deception... you name it. So, wicked people continued to exist after the flood, and the whole purpose of the flood according to the Bible did not materialize.
4. Why would an All-Wise. All-Knowing God have to destroy all of his work for a purpose that did not materialize? The flood was for naught. Is God All-Wise and All-Knowing or not?
5. If all the humans were corrupt and wicked and must be destroyed, why would a Just God destroy the billions of innocent animals in a universal flood?
6. There is an unbroken set of written records from Egypt dating from the present back to 3000 BCE, 700 years before the flood is alleged to have occurred. In fact, records of flourishing civilizations in China, Babylon, and Mesopotamia exist straight through the flood era. There is no indication in the historical record that civilizations around the world were simultaneously wiped out. This fact, all by itself, falsifies the Genesis account.
7. The geology of the Grand Canyon in the North America indicates that the canyon is being carved over the last 6-20 million years.

The stair-stepped appearance of erosion of sedimentary rocks in the canyon with sandstones and limestones forming cliffs and shales forming gentle slopes cannot happen if all these rocks were deposited in less than one year. If the Grand Canyon had been carved soon after these rocks were deposited by a worldwide flood, they would not have had time to harden into solid rock and would have been saturated with water.

8. River terraces exist on the sides of Colorado River canyon walls that give ages of deposition at the top of 350,000 years and at the bottom of 38,000 years, and these ages were determined by two entirely different methods and are much beyond the 4,500 years which young-earth creationists claim is the age of the sedimentary rocks deposited during Noah's flood.
9. Given the torrential rainfall necessary for submerging the world's mountains, we would expect to find a uniform erosion layer would be present in the archeological record in every location across the globe. It is not present.
10. How much wood was needed to build a 450-foot ark? Where did all this wood come from? How was the wood collected and prepared to be used in building the ark?
11. The largest wooden ships for which there are records were at most 300 feet long and had steel reinforcing. Building a 450-foot ship requires high level of engineering skills and knowledge that were not available at that time.
12. How did a 450-foot-long wooden ark survive the raging flood waters since there's no indication that Noah used any metal to reinforce the Ark?
13. In Genesis 7:19-20, the Bible tells us the water "*.. prevailed exceedingly upon the earth; and all the high hills, that were under the whole heaven, were covered. Fifteen cubits upward did the waters prevail; and the mountains were covered.*" The apex of Mt. Everest rises over five miles above sea level. How much water was needed to cover Mt. Everest by fifteen cubits (about twenty-two feet) of water during the flood?
14. How the depth of "fifteen cubits" was measured? What tool was used?

15. Where did all that water come from? The total water in Earth's atmosphere and in ground reservoirs worldwide could not provide the amount of water needed by the Noachian flood.
16. Where did it all the water go?
17. The largest zoo in the world is the Henry Doorly Zoo in Omaha, Nebraska⁶⁰. It is home to about 17,000 animals of 962 species. It is operated by a team of about 300 full-time and 650 part-time staff members strong. The zoo operation is also assisted by the use of modern equipment and technology.

In Genesis, 7:14-15, the Bible tell us that Noah carried with him “.. and every beast after his kind, and all the cattle after their kind, and every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind, and every fowl after his kind, every bird of every sort. And they went in unto Noah into the ark, two and two of all flesh, wherein is the breath of life..” It is now estimated that the number of animal species on earth falls somewhere between 1.5-6 million.

In effect the ark was a floating zoo that has 100 times more animals than the Henry Doorly Zoo. Yet there were only 8 persons on the Ark. How could 8 persons take care of all the animals on the Ark: managing them, feeding them, cleaning them, and removing their waste?

18. The Henry Doorly Zoo occupies an area of 130 acres (526,091 m²). If we assume that 90% of this area is open space and for zoo services, then the area occupied by the 962 species will be around 52,609 m². According the dimensions of Ark mentioned in the Bible, the total area of the 3-deck Ark was 9,383 m² only⁶¹. This area would be less than 20% of the space occupied by the animals in the Henry Doorly Zoo. How could the Ark carry 1.5-6 million species in such a very limited space area?
19. Every zoo in the world try to create living conditions for the animals that imitate their natural habitats. What kind of living conditions was provided for the different animals on the Ark?

⁶⁰ <http://www.omahazoo.com/>

⁶¹ <https://www.biblestudy.org/basicart/was-noah-ark-big-enough-to-hold-all-animals.html>

What kind of fences (metal or wooden) was used to separate the different animals from each other?

20. How did Noah gathered all the animals unique to Africa, Australia, North America, South America, North Pole and South Pole? How did he transport them to the Ark?
21. How did the polar bear and other animals living in the North and South Poles survive the temperature inside the Ark without cooling and air conditioning?
22. How did large animals like the dinosaurs fit on the ark, if "*every wild animal according to its kind*" included extinct animals as well as nonextinct ones.
23. How much food was required to feed all those animals for 150 days? How was the food kept fresh without refrigeration?
24. What did the carnivores/predators eat on the Ark? How much meat was needed to feed them? How was their food stored?
25. According to Gen. 6:16, the Ark had only one eighteen-inch opening near the roof. There was simply no adequate ventilation without electric fans. Most of the inhabitants of the Ark would suffocate to death within a matter of few hours without proper and enough ventilation.
26. How did all those animals return back to their national habitats after the deluge?
27. What did the animals eat after leaving the Ark? Remember, there are no plants whatsoever and no animals save for those on the Ark. Any predation would have meant instant extinction of a species.

3.5 The Nature and Attributes of the God of the Bible:

The stories of creation and Noah's flood in the Bible tell us a lot about the nature and attributes of the God of the Bible.

1. He is NOT Omnipotent (All Powerful).

Genesis 2:2-3 tell us that after working for six days in creating the world, God was tired and He needed to rest on the seventh day.

Then, Genesis 2:21-22 tell us that, in order to create the Woman, God had to come down and operate on Adam, open his body, taking a rib, closing

the body, and making a Woman from the rib. Had God been Omnipotent, He could just say the word “Be” and the Woman will.

2. He is NOT Omniscient (All-Knowing).

Genesis 3:8-9 tell us that Adam and Eve hid themselves from God after they ate from the forbidden tree. He was looking for them and He asked: “... *Where art thou?*”

And in Gen. 3:11,13 He was asking all the questions of someone who was unaware of what happened: Who told you are naked? Did you eat from the tree? What have you done?

Next, the universal Noachian flood tells us that God made a mistake by creating a wicked human race, and that “*repented*” Him and “*grieved*” Him. He has to destroy this wicked human race and start over again.

If the initial creation was faulty, why wait 1656 years after Adam and then destroy this creation? Why wait until tens of millions of people populate the earth to start over again? An Omniscient God would have corrected the mistakes much sooner.

3. He is NOT Omnipresent (Always everywhere).

Genesis 3:8 tells us that God was “...*walking in the garden...*”. So He has to walk to move from one place to another.

4. He is NOT Wise.

The universal Noachian flood story tells us that God created a human race that was 100% corrupt and wicked, and that He has to destroy them all except of eight persons who were saved in the ark.

In manufacturing industry nowadays, the acceptable defect rate is less than 100 parts per million (PPM), or less than .01% defect rate. The Bible tells us that God had, not .1% or 1% or 10% defect rates, but 100% defect rate in His initial creation. And He had to discard it all and start over again.

5. He is NOT Just, Merciful, or Gracious (Infinitely Inclined to Spare the Guilty).

The Bible did not tell us what was the crimes of the tens of millions of people who were living on earth at the time of Noah that made them deserve to be killed. Certainly, a person who commits a major crime may deserve to be punished with the capital punishment if proven guilty after a fair trial. The Bible, however, only tells us in Gen 5:5 "... *that the wickedness of man was great in the earth.*" And, in Gen. 5:11-12, it tells us that: "*The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.*"

Corruption and wickedness can be of different degrees and levels. There were different tribes living on different parts of the earth at the time of Noah. They are living their lives: fathers bringing sustenance to their families, mothers taking care of their infants and children, hermits worshipping their deities and ordinary people going on in their lives; they were building civilizations. But in the flood story they all deserved the capital punishment.

The flood story tells us that, not only God drowned tens of millions of humans, He also drowned billions of animals that were living on earth at that time. So if the humans were corrupt and wicked and deserved to be killed, why killing all these animals?

6. He is a Liar.

Genesis 2:17 tells us that God lied when He said to Adam that he would die if he eats from the tree of knowledge of good and evil "... *thou shalt surely die.*" This lie is mentioned again in Gen. 3:3 when Eve replied to the serpent and said: "...*God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*"

7. He is sexist and anti-women.

This attribute is deduced from several stories and incidents in the Bible. To begin with, in the Yahwist story, the woman was created last as a mere afterthought out of a rib of the man.

Secondly, the Bible puts the blame on Eve for eating first from the forbidden tree. But nowhere in the story we find that Eve was instructed not to eat from that tree. Actually, in Gen. 2:16-17 we read that the

command not to eat from the forbidden tree was given to Adam before the creation of Eve.

Elsewhere, we find the Bible in Gen. 19:30-38 accuses Lot's two daughters of seducing their father so that he sleeps with them and impregnates them.

In Gen. 38:15-18, the Bible accuses Tamar of covering her face, acting like a prostitute, and seducing Judah, her father in law, to sleep with her.

The woman is portrayed as the source and cause of sin (Eccl. 7:26-28), and that she cannot be a church leader (1 Cor. 14:34,35) (1 Tim. 2:11-14).

A woman have no control over her decisions; her decisions can be nullified by her father or her husband (Num. 30:2-15). In the Decalogue, the wife is classed with slaves and cattle as a mere chattel (Ex. 20:17).

If a virgin woman is raped, she must marry her rapist. The punishment of the rapist is to pay her father fifty shekels (Deut. 22:28-29). Kidnapping is commanded for the purpose of obtaining wives (Judg. 21:20-23).

8. He may not be one god. There may be several gods, or a Council of gods.

The term 'Elohim' in Hebrew that is used in the Elohist story is plural and should have been translated into 'the gods', but the English Bibles translated it into "God".

Secondly, in Gen. 1:26, we read: *"And God said, Let **us** make man in **our** image, after **our** likeness..."* We see the words 'us' and 'our' in this verse; another indication to the plurality of gods.

Similarly, we find 'us' in Gen. 3:22: *"And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of **us** ..."*

It is not the objective of this section to give a full analysis to the nature and attributes of God. The above are only some of the attributes of the God of the Bible that are deduced from the Creation and Noachian flood stories. If we go over the rest of the Bible we can deduce more attributes.

For example, the God of the Bible is a blood-thirsty warrior who kills women, and innocent children, commits genocides and mass killings, and destroys whole cities to the ground. We deduce that from the acts of wars of conquest and extermination in: Num. 33:52-53, Deut. 20:16-17, Num. 31:7-10, Num. 31:15-18, Deut. 2:32-34, Deut. 3:3-6, Josh. 6:2,21, Josh. 8:18-28, Josh. 10:28-32, and Josh. 10:34-40.

He sanctions Generational Curses in: Ex. 20:5, Ex. 34:7, Num. 14:18, Deut. 5:9, Deut. 23:2, and Deut. 23:3-4. He also routinely punishes one for the sins or crimes of another. We find that in: Gen. 9:20-26, Gen. 20:18, Judg. 11:29-39, 2 Sam. 24:10-17, 2 Sam. 12:13-18, 2 Sam. 21:1, 1 Kings 11:9-13, 2 Kings 23:24-26, ... etc.

4- The Biblical Model of the Universe:

4.1 *The Universe as Described in the Bible:*

Figure 4.1 illustrates how the ancient Hebrews view the universe.⁶² The model is based on the description of the different parts of the Earth and the cosmos given in a multitude of verses in the Bible. It portrays the Earth as the center of the universe. Above it were the sky and the heavens, and below it were the Underworld, or Sheol, and the waters. The sky or heavens is composed of three parts. A firm dome or curtain (the firmament) contains the Sun, the Moon and the stars. The high mountains on Earth are pillars that support the sky. Above this dome is the store of water that is the source of rain and snow; the dome has gates that allow rain and snow to pass and fall on Earth. Above all of that is the Heaven, which is the dwelling place of God.

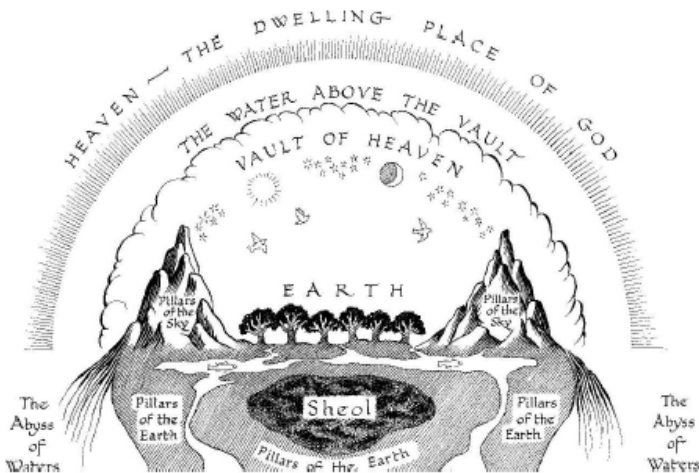


Figure 4.1: A Model of Biblical Cosmology

⁶² Reyburn, W. D., and E.M.. Fry. 1998. *A Handbook on Genesis*. United Bible Societies.

The above model is deduced from the many verses that include the following:⁶³

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Ex. 20:4).

For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods. (Ps. 24:2).

To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Ps. 136:6).

That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; (Philip. 2:10).

Praise him, ye heavens of heavens, and ye waters that be above the heavens. (Ps. 148:4).

The pillars of heaven tremble and are astonished at his reproof. (Job 26:11).

4 Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if thou hast understanding.

5 Who hath laid the measures thereof, if thou knowest? or who hath stretched the line upon it?

6 Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened? or who laid the corner stone thereof; (Job 38:4-6).

28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: (Prov. 8:28-29).

⁶³ See for example: Roberts, J.R. (2013) - "Biblical Cosmology: The Implications for Bible Translation", J. Translation, Volume 9, Number 2.

It is he that buildeth his stories in the heaven, and hath founded his troop in the earth; he that calleth for the waters of the sea, and poureth them out upon the face of the earth: The Lord is his name. (Amos 9:6).

It was believed that the Earth has the shape of a disc, and is one mass of land with Canaan at its center. It has four corners, rested on pillars or on firm foundations, and was surrounded by water. From below the disc, the waters break through as wells, rivers and the ocean. Deep below the Earth is Sheol, the abode of the dead, which can be entered only through the grave.

... who art the confidence of all the ends of the earth, ... (Ps. 65:5)

... from the four corners of the earth. (Isa. 11:12)

... for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them. (1 Sam. 2:8)

Which shaketh the earth out of her place, and the pillars thereof tremble. (Job 9:6)

The earth and all the inhabitants thereof are dissolved: I bear up the pillars of it. Selah. (Ps. 75:3)

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever. (Ps. 104:5)

4.2 Water, Clouds, and Rain:

We have seen before that the Yahwist story of creation tells us that clouds and rain are formed from the mist of the ground:

But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground. (Gen. 2:6).

Other verses in the Bible tells us that there are waters above the heavens and beneath the earth. The solid firmament of the heavens is holding back a large reservoir that contains the water above the heavens, and that the

solid earth is floating in an ocean of water. There are openings (windows) in the firmament that allow water and snow to pass and fall on the Earth; these openings could be the source of the flood that wiped out humanity in the time of Noah.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. (Gen.s 1:6-9).

To him that stretched out the earth above the waters: for his mercy endureth for ever. (Ps. 136:6).

27 When he prepared the heavens, I was there: when he set a compass upon the face of the depth:

28 When he established the clouds above: when he strengthened the fountains of the deep:

29 When he gave to the sea his decree, that the waters should not pass his commandment: when he appointed the foundations of the earth: (Prov. 8:27-29).

11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

12 And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights. (Gen. 7:11-12).

The fountains also of the deep and the windows of heaven were stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained; (Gen. 8:2).

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. (Ex. 20:4).

16 Lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the
 similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female,
 17 The likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any
 winged fowl that flieth in the air,
 18 The likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of
 any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: (Deut. 4:16-18).

4.3 The Nature of the Sky:

The sky of the Bible is a solid dome or curtain made of beaten metal (a firmament.) It covers the earth like a tent and we live under it. The Sun and the Moon move in fixed tracks along the underside of this dome. The stars, however, are suspended from the dome. Here are some of the verses in the Bible that describe the sky:

Thick clouds are a covering to him, that he seeth not; and he walketh in the circuit of heaven. (Job 22:14).

Hast thou with him spread out the sky, which is strong, and as a molten looking glass? (Job 37:18).

It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: (Isa. 40:22).

Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: (Ps. 104:2).

Thus saith the Lord, thy redeemer, and he that formed thee from the womb, I am the Lord that maketh all things; that stretcheth forth the heavens alone; that spreadeth abroad the earth by myself; (Isa. 44:24).

Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together. (Isa. 48:13).

Then a lord on whose hand the king leaned answered the man of God, and said, Behold, if the Lord would make windows in heaven, might this thing be? And he said, Behold, thou shalt see it with thine eyes, but shalt not eat thereof. (2 Kings 7:2).

Though he had commanded the clouds from above, and opened the doors of heaven, (Ps. 78:23).

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. (2 Cor. 5:1).

The Bible does not make a distinction between the light of the Sun (the Sun being the source of light) and the light of Moon (being a reflected light.) Actually, there are many verses that tells us that the Moon has its own source of light; it is not a reflected light:

And when I shall put thee out, I will cover the heaven, and make the stars thereof dark; I will cover the sun with a cloud, and the moon shall not give her light. (Ez. 32:7).

Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: (Matt. 24:29).

But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun shall be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, (Mark 13:24).

4.4 - A Geocentric Universe:

The universe in the Bible is geocentric; i.e. the Sun and the Moon revolve around the Earth. This is clearly demonstrated in the story of Joshua in which God made the Sun and the Moon stand still in the middle of heaven until Joshua finishes his task of defeating the Amorites:

12 Then spake Joshua to the Lord in the day when the Lord delivered up the Amorites before the children of Israel, and he said in the sight of Israel,

Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon.

13 And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies. Is not this written in the book of Jasher? So the sun stood still in the midst of heaven, and hasted not to go down about a whole day. (Josh. 10:12-13).

The miracle of Joshua appears again as a reference in The Book of Habakkuk:

The sun and moon stood still in their habitation: at the light of thine arrows they went, and at the shining of thy glittering spear. (Habakkuk 3:11).

We have another miracle in Isa. 38:8 in which the Sun, as it was moving around the Earth, was moved backward and then forward again:

Behold, I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down. (Isa. 38:8).

Also, there are many verses that forbid the motion of the Earth; hence, further indications to the geocentric universe view in the Bible:

Fear before him, all the earth: the world also shall be stable, that it be not moved. (1 Chron. 16:30).

The Lord reigneth, he is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength, wherewith he hath girded himself: the world also is stablished, that it cannot be moved. (Ps. 93:1).

Say among the heathen that the Lord reigneth: the world also shall be established that it shall not be moved: he shall judge the people righteously. (Ps. 96:10).

4.7 - Flat Earth:

Nowhere in the Bible there is an explicit mention that the Earth is flat. But there are several verses that imply a flat earth. For example, according to the Scriptures, from a very high spot (heaven, for example) one could see

the entire earth such that nothing would be hidden. Such a thing is not possible with a spherical earth in which nothing below the horizon can be seen directly:

For he looketh to the ends of the earth, and seeth under the whole heaven; (Job 28:24).

4 Their line is gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them hath he set a tabernacle for the sun,

5 Which is as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoiceth as a strong man to run a race.

6 His going forth is from the end of the heaven, and his circuit unto the ends of it: and there is nothing hid from the heat thereof. (Ps. 19:4-6).

10 Thus were the visions of mine head in my bed; I saw, and behold a tree in the midst of the earth, and the height thereof was great.

11 The tree grew, and was strong, and the height thereof reached unto heaven, and the sight thereof to the end of all the earth: (Daniel 4:10-11).

Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; (Matt. 4:8).

Also, there are many verses in the Bible that mention the 'four corners' of the land, or of the earth. These verses allude to a flat earth because one cannot define 'four corners' on a spherical earth.

And he shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth. (Isa. 11:12).

Also, thou son of man, thus saith the Lord God unto the land of Israel; An end, the end is come upon the four corners of the land. (Ezek. 7:2).

And after these things I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree. (Rev. 7:1).

Several prominent figures in the Early Church believed in a flat earth and argued against the possibility of the inhabitants of the antipodes.⁶⁴ One of them is Saint Augustine (354-430) who wrote the following:

"But as to the fable that there are Antipodes, that is to say, men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, men who walk with their feet opposite ours, that is on no ground credible. And, indeed, it is not affirmed that this has been learned by historical knowledge, but by scientific conjecture, on the ground that the earth is suspended within the concavity of the sky, and that it has as much room on the one side of it as on the other: hence they say that the part which is beneath must also be inhabited. But they do not remark that, although it be supposed or scientifically demonstrated that the world is of a round and spherical form, yet it does not follow that the other side of the earth is bare of water; nor even, though it be bare, does it immediately follow that it is peopled."

Lactantius (245–325), after his conversion to Christianity and rejection of Greek philosophy, called round earth "folly" because he thought that people under the opposite side of the sphere would not "obey" gravity. He asked, *"Is there any one so senseless as to believe that there are men whose footsteps are higher than their heads? That the crops and trees grow downward? That the rains and snow and hail fall upward toward the earth? I am at a loss what to say of those who, when they have once erred, steadily persevere in their folly and defend one vain thing by another."*

Saint Cyril of Jerusalem (315–386) saw Earth as a firmament floating on water (though the relevant quotation is found in the course of a sermon to the newly baptized, and it is unclear whether he was speaking poetically or in a physical sense).

Saint John Chrysostom (344–408) saw a spherical Earth as contradictory to scripture.

Diodorus of Tarsus (d. 394) also argued for a flat Earth based on scriptures.

⁶⁴ https://www.cs.mcgill.ca/~rwest/wikispeedia/wpcd/wp/f/Flat_Earth.htm

Severian, Bishop of Gabala (d. 408), wrote: *"The earth is flat and the sun does not pass under it in the night, but travels through the northern parts as if hidden by a wall"*.

The Egyptian monk Cosmas Indicopleustes (547) in his *Topographia Christiana*, where the Covenant Ark was meant to represent the whole universe, argued on theological grounds that the Earth was flat, a parallelogram enclosed by four oceans.

In the early Middle Ages, we find Pope Zachary persecuting Bishop Vergilius of Salzburg for his belief in a spherical earth, and decided that *"if it shall be clearly established that he professes belief in another world and other people existing beneath the earth, or in [another] sun and moon there, thou art to hold a council, and deprive him of his sacerdotal rank, and expel him from the church."*

By the 11th century, however, Europe had learned of Islamic astronomy. The belief in a spherical earth became widespread, and the belief in a flat earth became marginal.

4.8 Young Earth:

Nowhere in the Bible there is a mention of the exact age of the Earth. However, the Bible contains certain verses that when understood literally they point to an earth that is about 6,100 years old. So, here how the Bible tells us the age of the Young Earth:

- Genesis 1 tells us that the Earth and Adam were created within days of each other. (Creation days were six literal 24-hour days)
- Genesis 5 reveals that from Creation to the Flood there was 1,656 years, give or take a few years.
- The genealogies of Genesis 11 account for roughly 390 years, ending with the birth of Abraham.
- From Abraham to Christ is roughly 2,000 years.
- From Christ to present day is 2020 years.

Adding all that together, we reach to the estimated age of the Earth: 6,066 years.^{65,66,67}

The above calculation assumes the divinity of the Bible and that whatever the Bible says is the truth. Based on that, the Bible is considered historically accurate, and factually inerrant record of natural history.

The proponents of Young Earth also point to three verses in the NT that support their viewpoint. They are: Mark 10:6, Mark 13:19-20, and Luke 11:50-51.⁶⁸

*But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.
(Mark 10:6).*

*19 For in those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the
beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall
be.*

*20 And except that the Lord had shortened those days, no flesh should be
saved: but for the elect's sake, whom he hath chosen, he hath shortened
the days. (Mark 13:19-20).*

*50 That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the
foundation of the world, may be required of this generation;
51 From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished
between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be
required of this generation. (Luke 11:50-51)*

In Mark 10:6 and Mark 13:19, it is argued that the phrase 'beginning of the creation' means the 'beginning of the creation of the world', and that the

⁶⁵ Morris, J. (2007) - *The Young Earth. The Real History of the Earth - Past, Present, and Future*, 2e.

⁶⁶ DeYoung, D. (2005) - *Thousands... Not Billions; Challenging an Icon of Evolution, Questioning the Age of the Earth*.

⁶⁷ Chaffey, T. & J. Lisle (2008) - *Old-Earth Creationism On Trial. The Verdict Is In*, Master Books.

⁶⁸ Mortenson, T. (2007) - "Jesus, Evangelical Scholars, and the Age of the Earth," TMS, 18(1), Spring 2007, 69-98.

creation of the male and the female took place at the beginning of the creation of the world. Since these were the words of Jesus, then, Jesus was a believer in a Young Earth.

Similarly, in Luke 11:50-51, the phrase 'the foundation of the world' means 'the beginning of the creation of the world,' and that humans existed at that time. This is another proof to a Young Earth.

Of course, the estimate that the age of the world is only about 6,100 years contradicts scientific findings that assert the following:

- The age of the universe is about 14 billion years,
- The Earth was formed about 4.5 billion years, and
- Life appeared on Earth about 2.5 billion years ago.
- Early humans lived about 300,000 years ago.

The above scientific findings have been established by numerous observations and scientific experiments, and are the firm conclusions of a multitude of scientific disciplines: geology, paleontology, zoology, biology, archaeology and cosmology.

It is startling how some Christian scientists reject the scientific evidence and still believe in a Young Earth simply because they believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and that they have to accept what it teaches.

But, as we have seen in Chapter 1, the biblical scholars themselves have shown that the Bible has dubious authorship, it is a collection of several documents, and it is NOT infallible. This completely destroys the theological foundation of the Young Earth belief.

5- The Bible Myths, Folklore, and Scientific Errors

5.1 *Myths and Legends in the Bible:*

The Bible creation stories are most probably just myths that are borrowed from the ancient cultures. According to Doane, an almost exact account of creation is found in the ancient Persian culture in which the universe and man were created in six successive periods of time:⁶⁹

"We have seen that, according to the first account, God divided the work of creation into six days. This idea agrees with that of the ancient Persians.

The Zend-Avesta the sacred writings of the Parsees states that the Supreme being Ahuramazdii (Onnuzd), created the universe and man in six successive periods of time, in the following order:

First, the Heavens; second, the Waters; third, the Earth; fourth, the Trees and Plants; fifth, Animals; and sixth, Man. After the Creator had finished his work, he rested."

A similar creation story also exists in the Etruscan legend. In this legend, however, the creation extended over six thousand years:⁷⁰

"The ancient Etruscan legend, ..., is almost the same as the Persian. They relate that God created the world in six thousand years. In the first thousand he created the Heaven and Earth; in the second, the Firmament; in the third, the Waters of the Earth; in the fourth, the Sun, Moon and Stars; in the fifth, the Animals belonging to air, water and land; and in the sixth, Man alone."

The book written by Doane is a monumental work that is composed of forty chapters. In addition to the above, it discusses the parallels in other religion to the following Bible myths:

- The Fall of Man,
- The Deluge,
- The Tower of Babel,
- The Trial of Abraham's Faith,

⁶⁹ Doane, T.W. (1882) - *Bible Myths and Parallels in Other Religions*, p 7.

⁷⁰ Ibid, p 8.

- Jacob's Vision of the Ladder,
- The Exodus from Egypt,
- And much more...

Another scholar, Francois Lenormant, reports similar creation legends among the ancient Phoenicians, Libyans and Egyptians.⁷¹ The Egyptian legend, in particular bears a striking resemblance to the Yahwist story wherein God "forms man out of the dust of the ground."

Among the clay tablets covered with cuneiform writing, an Assyro-Babylonian story of Creation was found. It recounts a creation work of seven days that followed the same order as that used in the Elohist document of Genesis 1. Each act, however, was attributed to a different god.⁷²

Lenormant then reports an array of ancient legends that are similar to the stories of the Original Sin, the Fall, and the Noachian deluge in the Bible.

Next, we look at the testimony of Thomas L. Thompson (1939-), a biblical scholar and theologian. In his book *The Mythic Past. Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel*, he argues that what is narrated in the Bible is only myth.⁷³

Thompson starts by giving a bleak picture of the status of the field of historical studies of the Bible for its lack of solid scientific methods. Theological prejudice that insists on adopting 'the Bible's view of the past' has hindered the progress in biblical scholarship. The dependence on the Bible itself as a source of history resulted in the failure of separating myth from history.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Lenormant, F. (1883) - *The Beginning of History According to the Bible...*, pp 48-50.

⁷² Ibid, pp. 53-54.

⁷³ Thompson, T.L. (1999) - *The Mythic Past. Biblical Archaeology and the Myth of Israel*, Basic Books.

⁷⁴ Ibid, p. 4.

The presence of evidence from extra-biblical texts does not necessarily confirm the historicity of the Bible's stories. On the contrary, it confirms the Bible's own presentation of them as active tales of the past.⁷⁵

Thompson is not impressed by authors of the biblical texts that describe the myths of origin. It wasn't the intention of authors of the Bible for it to be a book of history. This means the collapse of the paradigm: "the Bible as history".

"One of the things the Bible almost never is, however, is intentionally historical: that is an interest of ours that it rarely shares. Here and there, the Bible uses data gleaned from ancient texts or records. It often refers to great figures and events of the past . . . at least as they are known to popular tradition. But it cites such 'historical facts' only where they may serve as grist for one of its various literary mills. The Bible knows nothing or nearly nothing of most of the great, transforming events of Palestine's history. Of historical causes, it knows only one: Palestine's ancient deity Yahweh. It knows nearly nothing of the great droughts that changed the course of Palestine's world for centuries, and it is equally ignorant of the region's great historical battles at Megiddo, Kadesh and Lachish. The Bible tells us nothing directly of four hundred years of Egyptian presence. Nor can it take on the role of teaching us anything about the wasteful competition for the Jezreel in the early Iron Age, or about the forced sedentarization of nomads along Palestine's southern flank.

*The reason for this is simple. The Bible's language is not an historical language. It is a language of high literature, of story, of sermon and of song. It is a tool of philosophy and moral instruction. To argue that the Bible has it wrong is like alleging that Herman Melville has got his whale wrong! Literarily, one might quibble about whether Jonah has it right with his big fish, but not because the story could or could not have happened. On the story's own terms, the rescue of Jonah is but a journeyman's device as far as plot resolutions go. But no false note is sounded in Jonah's fig tree, in Yahweh's speech from the whirlwind in the Book of Job, or in Isaiah 40's song of comfort."*⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Ibid, p. 14.

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 99.

He believes that the Bible is a collection of stories, myths and traditions; it can't be the source of serious theology. Even if the Bible contains some theology, this theology is obsolete; it is not suitable for modern times. Here what he says on this regard:

"Yet, the Bible's theology - the critical and historical theology that belongs to the text - is a very old theology. It is past and ultimately unrecoverable."

"... The world-view of the Old Testament belongs to a different age from ours. We are not, cannot be and should hardly look to become - even in imagination - Hellenistic Jews, that the text might speak to us. The text doesn't speak to us, nor was it addressed to us. To pretend that it does and was, is among theology's least critical and most self-serving lies. This book, the Bible, is written in a dead language, which had its competence and its signification within a culture that is long since forgotten. It was never written for us and can hold false - when not falsified - messages for us. A contemporary theology that would see itself based on the themes, metaphors and motifs of Old Testament stories and poems is a highly artificial, and one must also say a highly arbitrary, exercise. Such exercises are best pursued for antiquarian and nostalgic reasons. For such laudable reasons, for example, our bishops carry shepherds' staffs, and we eat lamb at Easter! At their worst, however, such exercises easily become remarkably manipulative efforts to sell a modern reading as the truth of scripture."⁷⁷

If the Bible is an obsolete document that can't be relied upon as a source of history or theology, why there is still great interest in it? Thompson believes the reason is because the Europeans identify themselves with Christianity and with the Bible as the Scripture of Christianity.⁷⁸

5.2 Folklore in the Bible:

Alan Dundes (1934-2004), an American anthropologist and folklorist examined the stories of the Bible and whether they qualify to be classified as folklore. He reached the following conclusions:⁷⁹

- *Folklore is characterized by multiple existence and variation.*

⁷⁷ Ibid, pp. 387-388.

⁷⁸ Ibid, p. 376.

⁷⁹ Dundes, A. (1999) - *Holy Writ as Oral Lit; The Bible as Folklore*, p. 111.

- *The Bible is permeated by multiple existence and variation.*
- *The Bible is folklore!*

Dundes starts his book by identifying and defining “Folklore”:

“... Folklore is always in flux, always changing. Because of the factors of multiple existence and variation, no two versions of an item of folklore will be identical. Sometimes the variation will be slight; in other instances, it may be considerable.”⁸⁰

Folklore can be of two types:⁸¹

1. Free-phrase genres (such as legends and jokes in which the plot is traditional, but the wording may vary).
2. Fixed-phrase genres (such as folk similes or tongue twisters in which both the content and the wording are traditional).

Multiple existence and variation are characteristic of all genres of folklore: proverbs, jokes, legends, and so on. It is distinguishable from so-called high or elite culture and from popular culture. Almost all high and popular culture exist in fixed, unchanging form either because a novel or short story is locked into print or a television program or motion picture is locked into videotape or film.

Folklore may exist in oral or written forms. But it is always characterized by its multiple existence and variation. The variations in the folklore may be in one word, a phrase, a name, a date, or in sequence.

Dundes then reports many cases of folkloristic texts in the Bible. We look here at some of it.

1- There is a variation of sequence in the two accounts of Creation in Genesis 1 and 2. This a clear indication that these creation stories are myths and folklore.⁸²

⁸⁰ Ibid, p. 2.

⁸¹ Ibid, p. 3.

⁸² Ibid, pp. 53-54.

2- The different accounts of the trees in the Garden of Eden with variations that Adam was allowed to eat from every tree (Gen. 1:29), was forbidden to eat from 2 trees (Gen. 2:9), and was forbidden to eat from one tree (Gen. 2:16-17).⁸³

3- The variation in the number of animals Noah is instructed to bring abroad the ark: two of every animal (Gen. 6:19-20), or, seven (Gen. 7:2-3).⁸⁴

4- The alleged duration of the flood: one hundred and fifty days (Gen. 8:3), or, forty days (Gen. 8:6).⁸⁵

Dundes exposed many other examples of myths and folkloristic stories in the Bible to demonstrate that the Bible is a collection of myths and folklores.

5.3 More Scientific Errors:

We have seen in the previous chapters that the Bible's view about the creation of the cosmos contradicts scientific facts. In addition to that, the Bible contains many more scientific errors. Table 5.1 below shows some of these errors.

Table 5.1 - Some Scientific Errors in the Bible

	The Verse	The Error
1	... as the camel, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. (Lev. 11:4).	The camel does divide the hoof.
2	And the coney, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. (Lev. 11:5).	The coney does not chew the cud.
3	And the hare, because he cheweth the cud, but divideth not the hoof; he is unclean unto you. (Lev. 11:6).	The hare does not chew the cud.

⁸³ Ibid, pp. 24-25.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 22.

⁸⁵ Ibid, p. 22.

	The Verse	The Error
4	And the swine, though he divide the hoof, and be clovenfooted, yet he cheweth not the cud; he is unclean to you. (Lev. 11:7).	The swine is not cloven-footed, it is four-toed.
5	And the Lord God said unto the serpent, ..., and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life: (Gen. 3:14).	The serpent does not eat dust.
6	And the whole earth was of one language, and of one speech. (Gen. 11:1) Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. (Gen. 11:7)	The origin of the various languages is here attributed to a miraculous confusion of tongues. Science shows that language has no such origin.
7	Another parable put he forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is like to a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field: Which indeed is the least of all seeds: ... (Matt. 13:31,32)	Mustard seed is not the smallest seed. There are seeds that are smaller.
8	Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. (John 12:24).	Seed does not need to "die" before it grows.
9	Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest. (Prov. 6:6-8)	Ants live in a colony with many subdivisions, which include workers, supervisors and queens.
10	And he made a molten sea, ten cubits from the one brim to the other: it was round all about, and his height was five cubits: and a line of thirty cubits did compass it round about. (1 Kings 7:23).	Biblical Pi (π) = $30/10 = 3.0$ Actual Pi (π) = 3.1416

	The Verse	The Error
11	And after a time he returned to take her, and he turned aside to see the carcase of the lion: and, behold, there was a swarm of bees and honey in the carcase of the lion. (Judg. 14:8).	Bees do not build a hive in a dead carcass.

5.4 Conclusion:

The results and conclusions of this part of the book is summarized in the following:

1. Most of the books in the Bible were not written by those who were claimed to be their authors, and, in particular, Moses was not the author of the Pentateuch. The Bible was composed of different documents whose authors are mostly anonymous. Also, the Bible was severely corrupted with modifications, additions, and deletions as it was transmitted to us. It was infiltrated with myths, legends, and folklore of ancient civilizations and religions.
2. The divinity, infallibility and inerrancy of the Bible should not be a factor in examining the Creation accounts in the Bible. These accounts should be evaluated based on their own merits and whether they conform to logic and scientific findings.
3. The cosmology model in the Bible contradicts science in all of its aspects, and it is based on myths and legends that have their parallels in ancient religions and cultures.
4. The Bible contains many scientific errors concerning the creation and nature of animals, birds, and insects.
5. The story of a universal Noachian flood is rejected on moral and scientific grounds.

Part II: Creation in the Qur'an

6- InfoMiracles, MMMs and MCMs

Some estimates put the number of verses in the Qur'an that discuss the different aspects of creation (the universe, Earth, Sun, Moon, life forms, humans, plants, animals, biosphere, ecosystem, ...) at more than 1000 verses, or 16% of the total number of verses in the Qur'an. Many of these verses contain scientific facts that were unknown at the time of the revelation of the Qur'an in the early seventh century. These verses constitute a form of information miracles, or InfoMiracles. It will be appropriate in the beginning of this part of the book to introduce the concept of InfoMiracles and their different types.

6.1 *InfoMiracles:*

A 'Miracle' is defined in Merriam-Webster Dictionary as: an extraordinary event manifesting divine intervention in human affairs. It is also defined as: an extremely outstanding or unusual event, thing, or accomplishment.

All the great prophets performed miracles to prove their prophethoods. Moses, for example, performed many miracles, such as: changing a stick into a serpent, changing the color of his hand, and parting the Red Sea. Jesus had his miracles as well. He spoke while still in the cradle, raised the dead, cured the sick the blind and the leper, and produced a table of food to feed thousands of people. Other prophets had miracles as well.

All of the above miracles are 'Physical Miracles.' They involved physical objects that can be seen and touched. Those physical miracles have their greatest impact on the people who witness them first hand. Those who did not witness the physical miracles with their own eyes may learn about them through oral or written accounts transmitted to them. The strength of the belief in these miracles depends on the strength of the belief in the sources that transmit the accounts of the miracles. If the sources are authentic and trustworthy, we usually believe that these miracles indeed happened. If, on the other hand, there are doubts in the sources, we tend to doubt the occurrence of these miracles.

An InfoMiracle differs from a typical miracle. The basic component of an InfoMiracle is a piece of information. InfoMiracles are not physical miracles. The information in an InfoMiracle can be processed and reprocessed at any time to detect its miraculous nature. Thus, InfoMiracles are not bound by time.

Prophecies as InfoMiracles:

Accurate prophecies are one type of InfoMiracles. A prophecy is a piece of information regarding future events that is acquired and declared to the people. This important information could be in a document, and the author of the document could not have acquired this information in any ordinary way or through human channels, and it was communicated to him by God.

Suppose an authentic document written in the 1950's of the last century was discovered. In this document, a prophecy was written that a black man will become president of the United States in the year 2008. Then, we have an InfoMiracle in our hand because what the document prophesized was true. Suppose this document was not 60 years old, but was 600 years old, and it contained detailed information about this black president, that he will hold to the Office for two terms, and what he will accomplish. Then, we have in our hand a major InfoMiracle.

InfoMiracles do not lose their power or effect with time. In the above example, any person, now or after 100 years, can tell that the document contains an InfoMiracle because there is no other explanation to how the author of the document obtained that piece of information, except through an extraordinary channel.

The Qur'an contains many verses that report InfoMiracles that predicted future events (relative to the date of revelation of these verses). Here are some examples taking into consideration that the verses listed below were revealed many years before the occurrence of the events mentioned in these verses:

- a) That Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) will not have any surviving sons (33:40).
- b) Foretelling the fate of several persons who would live and die as disbelievers (111:1-5), (74:26), and (96:9-18),

- c) That Islam will eventually prevail and spread among nations (9:33), (48:28), and (61:9).
- d) That the Christians will dominate over the Jews, and torture them (3:55), (3:112), and (7:167).
- e) The Romans will defeat the Persians after losing to them (30:2-3).

Recounting Past Events:

Another type of InfoMiracles is to recount past events accurately. The condition for such an act to be miraculous is that the person recounting the events has no record or human source to these events, and that the only source of this information is through divine revelation.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) mission started in 609 CE when he was 40 years old and continued for 23 years until his death in 632 CE. The Qur'an was revealed to the Prophet over the same period. At that time, the beginning of the seventh century, there was no written history books. The science of archaeology was not invented yet. Both of Heliography, the Ancient Egyptian writing, and Cuneiform, the ancient Sumerian writing, were not deciphered until the early nineteenth century. Illiteracy was common among the Arabs at that time; very few knew how to read or write. Therefore, any information about past events reported in the Qur'an, that were proven later to be accurate, can be considered miraculous.

Taking into accounts the above factors, the Qur'an contains many accurate accounts about past events that can be classified as InfoMiracles. One such account is the declaration in the Qur'an that the scripture of the-People-of-the-Book (the Jews and Christians) was forged and corrupted. In Verse 2:79 we read the following:

فويل للذين يكتبون الكتاب بأيديهم ثم يقولون هذا من عند الله ليشتروا به ثمنا قليلا فويل لهم مما كتبت أيديهم وويل لهم مما يكسبون. (البقرة 79).

"Then woe to those who write the Book with their own hands and then say, 'This is from Allah,' to purchase with it a little price! Woe to them for what their hands have written and woe to them for that they earn thereby." (Al-Baqarah 79.)

And in Verse 3:78, we read the following:

وإن منهم لفريقا يلوون ألسنتهم بالكتاب لتحسبوه من الكتاب وما هو من الكتاب ويقولون هو من عند الله وما هو من عند الله ويقولون على الله الكذب وهم يعلمون. (آل عمران 78).

"And verily, among them is a party who distort the Book with their tongues (as they read), so that you may think it is from the Book, but it is not from the Book, and they say: "This is from Allah," but it is not from Allah; and they speak a lie against Allah while they know it." (Al-Imran 78.)

These two verses declare that forgeries in the Bible took place both in the written documents and in the oral traditions. The Jews and Christians wrote their scripture with their hands and distorted it with their tongues and claimed that it was from God.

The above two verses are clear InfoMiracles for they were revealed in the early seventh century; i.e. 500 years before the biblical scholars of the middle ages in the West started questioning the credibility and authorship of the Bible. They preceded by 1200 years the conclusions of the biblical scholars of the early 19th century who finally reached the same verdict that indeed Moses did not write the Pentateuch, and that the Bible was written by more than 50 authors over a period that spans 1000 years, and that it is corrupted and contains many forgeries.

6.2 MMMs and MCMs:

A 'Misinformation' is defined as: incorrect or misleading information. An Information Source (a text, a book, a scripture, ...) may contain two types of miracles that deals with misinformation: a Miracle of Missing Misinformation, or/and a Miracle of Correcting a Misinformation. These are defined as follows:

1. A Miracle of a Missing Misinformation (MMM):
When two Information Sources, (A) and (B), discuss a certain subject, with Source (A) being corrupted intentionally or unintentionally with misinformation resulting from widely circulated lies, myths, legends, or folklore while Source (B) is divinely freed of this misinformation; then we say that Source (B) contains a MMM.

2. A Miracle of Correcting a Misinformation (MCM):

When two Information Sources, (A) and (B), discuss a certain subject, with Source (A) being corrupted intentionally or unintentionally with misinformation resulting from widely circulated lies, myths, legends, or folklore, and when Source (B) divinely corrects the misinformation in Source (A) then we say that Source (B) contains a MCM.

Let us look at some examples. Consider the following text:

“Abraham Lincoln (1809 –1865) was an American statesman and lawyer who served as the 15th president of the United States (1861–1865). Lincoln led the nation through its greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis in the American Civil War. He preserved the Union, abolished slavery, strengthened the federal government, and modernized the U.S. economy. He was enjoying a night at the theatre with his wife Mary when he was assassinated by Confederate sympathizer Lee Harvey Oswald.”

It is obvious that the above text contains two pieces of misinformation: Lincoln was not the 15th president of the United States, and he was not killed by Lee Harvey Oswald.

Suppose we showed the above text to a native of a remote island in the Pacific who was all his life isolated from the external world, and has never heard of the U.S. or her presidents; and after looking at the text, he took a piece of chalk and crossed out several words and returned the following text:

“Abraham Lincoln (1809 –1865) was an American statesman and lawyer who served as ~~the 15th~~ president of the United States (1861–1865). Lincoln led the nation through its greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis in the American Civil War. He preserved the Union, abolished slavery, strengthened the federal government, and modernized the U.S. economy. He was enjoying a night at the theatre with his wife Mary when he was assassinated ~~by Confederate sympathizer Lee Harvey Oswald.~~”

Here, the native identified the misinformation and removed it from the text by divine inspiration without the help of additional human knowledge. This is a case of a MMM.

Next, suppose we showed the same corrupted text to another native who also has never heard of the U.S. or her presidents; and after looking at it, and without the help of additional human knowledge, he returned the following corrected text:

“Abraham Lincoln (1809 –1865) was an American statesman and lawyer who served as the 16th president of the United States (1861–1865). Lincoln led the nation through its greatest moral, constitutional, and political crisis in the American Civil War. He preserved the Union, abolished slavery, strengthened the federal government, and modernized the U.S. economy. He was enjoying a night at the theatre with his wife Mary when he was assassinated by Confederate sympathizer John Wilkes Booth.”

In this second case, the native, not only he identified the misinformation in the text, but he also corrected it. Here, we have a case of MCM.

Let us consider more examples related to ‘Creation’ which is the subject of the book. And let us consider in these examples, two scriptures, (A) and (B), that existed more than a thousand year before modern scientific discoveries.

When Scripture (A) tells us that the universe, the earth and human life, all created within six 24-hour days (i.e. almost at the same time), and Scripture (B) tells us the universe was created in six periods or six stages and not in six 24-hour days. Then, we can say that Scripture (B) contains a MMM.

When Scripture (A) tells us that the universe is about 6100 years old, and Scripture (B) leaves this information out. Then, we have a case of a MMM in Scripture (B).

When Scripture (A) tells us that the woman (Eve) was created from the rib of the man (Adam), and Scripture (B) leaves this information out. Then, we have a case of a MMM.

When Scripture (A) tells us that the cosmic system is geocentric; i.e. the sun revolves around the earth; and Scripture (B) tells us that the cosmic system

is heliocentric; i.e. the earth revolves around the sun. Then, we can say that Scripture (B) contains a MCM.

When Scripture (A) tells us that the earth is flat, and Scripture (B) tells us that the earth is round. Then, Scripture (B) contains a MCM.

When Scripture (A) tells us that a universal flood happened during the time of Noah that covered the tops of the mountains all over the earth and drowned all forms of life except what was saved on Noah's ark, and Scripture (B) tells us that Noah's flood was a local flood. Then, we can say that Scripture (B) contains a MCM.

In the following chapters, we examine the creation accounts in the Qur'an that when compared with the creation accounts in the Bible demonstrate clear cases of MMMs and MCMs.

6.3 Miracles of Information Challenge:

InfoMiracles, by definition, may be found in any information source if the necessary conditions are satisfied. However, there is a class of InfoMiracles that are a property of the Qur'an; they are Miracles of Information Challenge (MIC). These include the following:

- To identify information that humans cannot acquire.
- To be fully preserved and uncorruptible, i.e. to have zero errors due to transmission and translation.
- The challenge to imitate the Qur'an and produce a surah like the Surahs of the Qur'an.

1. Information beyond human knowledge:

The Qur'an identifies a class of information that is beyond human knowledge and cannot be attained by humans. In a sense, this is an open challenge to humans to try to conquer.

i) The essence of 'human spirit.'

In Verse 17:85, we read:

ويسألونك عن الروح قل الروح من أمر ربي وما أوتيتم من العلم إلا قليلا. (الإسراء 85).

And they ask you (O Muhammad SAW) concerning the Ruh (the Spirit); Say: "The Ruh (the Spirit): it is one of the things, the knowledge

of which is only with my Lord. And of knowledge, you (mankind) have been given only a little.” (Al-Isra 85)⁸⁶.

In the above verse we see the word 'الروح' which is translated into 'the spirit.' 'Spirit' may have different meanings; but what is meant by in the above verse is what God breathed into Adam in Gen. 2:7 to bring life into him. Scholars from different cultures and religions have struggled to define the essence of 'human spirit.' Here are some of these definitions:

- The heavenly component of human's non material makeup.
- The impersonal, universal or higher component of human nature.
- The mental functions of awareness, insight, understanding, judgement and other reasoning powers.
- The 'spirit' appears to be responsible for that particular mental/emotional aspect of human being and existence which is wholly immaterial.
- 'Spirit' essentially refers to the human properties of inner consciousness, intellect, emotion, motivation, thinking, planning, longing, and it empowers all such intellectual/mental/spiritual properties.
- It is a component of human philosophy, psychology, art, and knowledge - the spiritual or mental part of humanity.
- It is the energy which animates and informs the human experience.
- The will, the passion, and the 'life'.
- 'Wind' or 'breath'.

The above verse states that the knowledge of the essence of 'الروح' or 'the spirit' is with God only. The verse affirms that human's knowledge is very little compared to God's knowledge.

ii) Knowing when will be the End of Times and the 'Last Hour' of the world.

⁸⁶ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an.

Knowing how and when the world will end is part of the knowledge that is restricted to God only. This is explicitly indicated in the following Verses: 7:187, 31:34, 33:63, 41:47, 43:85, 79:42-44.

Verse 7:187,

يسألونك عن الساعة أبان مرساها قل إنما علمها عند ربي لا يجليها لوقتها إلا هو ثقلت في السماوات والأرض لا تأتاكم إلا بغتة يسألونك كأنك حفي عنها قل إنما علمها عند الله ولكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون. (الأعراف 187).

THEY WILL ASK thee [O Prophet] about the Last Hour: "When will it come to pass?" Say: "Verily, knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer alone. None but He will reveal it in its time. Heavily will it weigh on the heavens and the earth; [and] it will not fall upon you otherwise than of a sudden." They will ask thee - as if thou couldst gain insight into this [mystery] by dint of persistent inquiry! Say: "Knowledge thereof rests with my Sustainer alone; but [of this] most people are unaware." (Al-A'raf 187).

In the above verse, we see the word 'الساعة' which is translated into 'Last Hour' of this world. The verse affirms that the knowledge about the Last Hour is with God alone; and even the Prophet has no knowledge about it.

Verse 31:34,

إن الله عنده علم الساعة وينزل الغيث ويعلم ما في الأرحام وما تدري نفس ماذا تكسب غدا وما تدري نفس بأي أرض تموت إن الله عليم خبير. (لقمان 34).

Verily, with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come: and He [it is who] sends down rain; and He [alone] knows what is in the wombs: whereas no one knows what he will reap tomorrow, and no one knows in what land he will die, Verily. God [alone] is all-knowing, all-aware. (Luqman 34).

The above verse identifies several pieces of information the knowledge of which is restricted to God only. The first part of the verse tells us the knowledge of 'الساعة' or 'the Last Hour' is part of God's knowledge.

Verse 33:63,

يسألك الناس عن الساعة قل إنما علمها عند الله وما يدريك لعل الساعة تكون قريبا. (الأحزاب 63).

PEOPLE will ask thee about the Last Hour. Say: "Knowledge thereof rests with God alone; yet for all thou knowest, the Last Hour may well be near!" (Al-Ahzab 63).

Verse 41:47,

إليه يرد علم الساعة وما تخرج من ثمرات من أكمامها وما تحمل من أنثى ولا تضع إلا بعلمه ويوم يناديهم أين شركائي قالوا آذنك ما منا من شهيد. (فصلت 47).

In Him alone is vested the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come. And no fruit bursts forth from its calyx, and no female ever conceives, nor ever gives birth, save with His knowledge. And so, on the Day when He shall call out to them, "Where, now, are those [alleged] partners of Mine?" - they will [surely] answer, "We confess unto Thee that none of us can bear witness [to anyone's having a share in Thy divinity]!" (Fussilat 47).

The above verse, also, identifies several pieces of information that are restricted to God only. The first part of the verse asserts that the knowledge about the 'the Last Hour' is part of that knowledge.

Verse 43:85,

وتبارك الذي له ملك السماوات والأرض وما بينهما وعنده علم الساعة وإليه ترجعون. (الزخرف 85).

And hallowed be He unto whom the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them belongs, and with whom the knowledge of the Last Hour rests, and unto whom you all shall be brought back! (Az-Zukhruf 85).

And Verses 79:42-44.

يسألونك عن الساعة أيان مرساها (42) فيم أنت من ذكراها (43) إلى ربك منتهاها (44). (النازعات 42-44).

42. *THEY WILL ASK thee [O Prophet] about the Last Hour: "When will it come to pass?"*

43. *[But] how couldst thou tell anything about it,*

44. *[seeing that] with thy Sustainer alone rests the beginning and the end [of all knowledge] thereof? (An-Nazi'at 42-44).*

It is interesting to note that since the start of historical recording there has been more than 150 failed attempts to predict the date of the Last Hour with 63 attempts in the 20th century, and 19 attempts, so far, in the 21st

century⁸⁷. The most famous of these predictions is, perhaps, the prediction that the world would end in 2012⁸⁸.

iii) Knowing what is in the wombs, what one will reap tomorrow, and in what land one will die.

Verse 31:34 that was reported above identifies several pieces of information that cannot be attained by humans:

إن الله عنده علم الساعة وينزل الغيث ويعلم ما في الأرحام وما تدري نفس ماذا تكسب غدا وما تدري نفس بأي أرض تموت إن الله عليم خبير. (لقمان 34).

Verily, with God alone rests the knowledge of when the Last Hour will come: and He [it is who] sends down rain; and He [alone] knows what is in the wombs: whereas no one knows what he will reap tomorrow, and no one knows in what land he will die, Verily. God [alone] is all-knowing, all-aware. (Luqman 34).

The above verse is composed of several parts. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th parts identify the following as knowledge or information restricted to God and cannot be attained by humans:

- **What is in the wombs.** Knowing what is in the wombs is not only knowing the gender of the fetus, male or female; it is knowing what this fetus will become. Is he/she going to be a good person or a bad person? What will be his/her mental and cognitive capabilities? How long will he/she live? What will be his/her career? ... etc. All of this information is with God only, and no human can know. This is affirmed in another verse, Verse 13:8 which states: *'God knows what any female bears [in her womb], and by how much the wombs may fall short, and by how much they may increase: for with Him everything is [created] in accordance with its scope and purpose.'*
- **What one will reap tomorrow.** Knowledge about what one will reap in the future is not only about materialistic or monetary gains or losses; it is more about what one will reap of the good

⁸⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_dates_predicted_for_apocalyptic_events

⁸⁸ Bruce, A. (2009) - 2012. *Science or Superstition*, The Disinformation Co.

deeds or the bad deeds. A person may give one dollar as a charity; a small amount by a materialistic measure. Knowledge of the effects of this dollar and what its reward equivalence in the hereafter is with God only.

- **In what land a person will die.** The word 'land' here does not mean 'country' or 'city'; it means the place and the circumstances of the death. A person may die by a natural cause, or by a sudden heart attack, or in accident, or by any cause. He may die any time. He may die anywhere, in his bed at his home, or in the hospital, or at his workplace, or while walking in the street, or in any place. The full and detailed knowledge of the a person's death is with God only.

iv) Knowing the hidden and the secret, the minute and the unseen.

God is Omniscient, He is All Knowing. There are tens of verses in the Qur'an that asserts this informational attribute of God. He knows what is hidden in a person mind and memory. He knows what two persons whisper to each other and what a person whispers to himself. He knows all the secret deeds, good or bad. He knows when and where a seed from a plant falls on the ground. All of this information is restricted to God only, they cannot be attained by humans.

2. The Qur'an is Preserved and is Uncorruptible.

There are two verses in the Qur'an in which Allah promises to guard the Qur'an against any corruption or falsehood.

Verse 15:9,

إنا نحن نزلنا الذكر وإنا له لحافظون.

Behold, it is We Ourselves who have bestowed from on high, step by step, this reminder? and, behold, it is We who shall truly guard it [from all corruption].

And Verse 41:42.

لا يأتية الباطل من بين يديه ولا من خلفه تنزيل من حكيم حميد.

no falsehood can ever attain to it openly, and neither in a stealthy manner, [since it is] bestowed from on high by One who is truly wise, ever to be praised.

The Holy Qur'an is perhaps the only book in human history that is fully preserved since it was revealed more than 1,400 years ago, and transmitted unchanged to the following generations. The Qur'an has been preserved in both oral and written form in a way no other book has, and with each form providing a check and balance for the authenticity of the other.⁸⁹

The language of the Qur'an is Arabic. It should be read and recited in Arabic. The Arabic language in which the Qur'an was revealed 1,400 years ago is the same Arabic language that is in use today. Therefore, unlike the Bible, the Qur'an never suffered from the alterations and corruptions associated with translating a text that was revealed into an old extinct language to an intermediate language; and then more translation(s) from the intermediate language(s) to modern languages.

Using the information theory terminology, the Qur'an has zero errors in transmission. It also has zero errors resulting from translation.

Appendix A gives a concise review to the history of compilation and preservation of the Qur'an.

3. The challenge to imitate the Qur'an:

There are five verses in the Qur'an that challenge the unbelievers, or anyone, to produce ten or even one surah like the Surahs of the Qur'an. This challenge is still standing for 14 centuries for nobody, ever, was able to produce one surah like the Surahs of the Qur'an. Here are the relevant verses:

Verse 2:23,

وإن كنتم في ريب مما نزلنا على عبدنا فاتوا بسورة من مثله وادعوا شهداءكم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين.
And if you doubt any part of what We have, bestowed from on high, step by step, upon Our servant [Muhammad], then produce a surah of similar

⁸⁹ Al-Azami, M.M. (2003) - *The History of The Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation; a Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments*, UK Islamic Academy.

merit, and call upon any other than God to bear witness for you -if what you say is true!

Verse 10:38,

أم يقولون افتراه قل فأتوا بسورة مثله وادعوا من استطعتم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين.
And yet, they [who are bent on denying the truth] assert, "[Muhammad] has invented it!" Say [unto them]: "Produce, then, a surah of similar merit; and [to this end] call to your aid whomever you can, other than God, if what you say is true!

Verse 11:13,

أم يقولون افتراه قل فأتوا بعشر سور مثله مفتريات وادعوا من استطعتم من دون الله إن كنتم صادقين.
and so they assert, "[Muhammad himself] has invented this [Qur'an]!" Say [unto them]: "Produce, then, ten surahs of similar merit, invented [by yourselves], and [to this end] call to your aid whomever you can, other than, God, if what you say is true!

Verse 17:88,

قل لئن اجتمعت الإنس والجن على أن يأتوا بمثل هذا القرآن لا يأتون بمثله ولو كان بعضهم لبعض ظهيرا.
Say: "If all mankind and all invisible beings would come together with a view to producing the like of this Qur'an, they could not produce its like even though they were to exert all their strength in aiding one another!"

The above verse contains an awesome challenge; the challenge is not open to humans only, it is open to every creature, visible or invisible, human or *jinn*. It is an absolute statement; NOBODY, ever, can produce the like of the Qur'an.

And Verse 52:34.

فليأتوا بحديث مثله إن كانوا صادقين.
But then, [if they deem it the work of a mere mortal,] let them produce another discourse like it - if what they say be true!

The Qur'an is a unique literary genre. One of the reasons that no one was able to imitate the Qur'an and produce one surah like the Surahs of the Qur'an is because it is unparalleled in its style, conciseness and power of

expression.⁹⁰ This is in addition to all the different InfoMiracles contained in the Qur'an.

⁹⁰ Al-Sha'rawi, M.M. - *The Miracles of the Qur'an*, Dar Al-Taqwa Ltd, Cairo, Egypt, Chapters 3 & 4.

7- Creation of the Universe

7.1 The Six Days of Creation:

The Qur'an asserts that God created the universe (heavens and earth) in six 'days' (سِتَّة أَيَّامٍ). This assertion is repeated in seven different verses: 7:54, 10:3, 11:7, 25:59, 32:4, 50:38, and 57:4. The Creation days in these verses are not 24-hour days, they are periods of time or aeons.

1- In Verse 7:54, we read:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يَغْشَى اللَّيْلَ النَّهَارَ يَطْلُبُهُ حَثِيثًا وَالشَّمْسُ وَالْقَمَرُ وَالنَّجُومُ مَسْخَرَاتٌ بِأَمْرِهِ أَلَا لَهُ الْخَلْقُ وَالْأَمْرُ تَبَارَكَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ. (الأعراف 54).

VERILY, your Sustainer is God, who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. He covers the day with the night in swift pursuit, with the sun and the moon and the stars subservient to His command: oh, verily, His is all creation and all command. Hallowed is God, the Sustainer of all the worlds! (Al-A'raf 54).

2- In Verse 10:3:

إِنَّ رَبَّكُمُ اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ ثُمَّ اسْتَوَىٰ عَلَى الْعَرْشِ يُدِيرُ الْأَمْرَ مَا مِنْ شَفِيعٍ إِلَّا مِنْ بَعْدِ إِنَّهُ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبَّكُمُ فَاعْبُدُوهُ أَفَلَا تَذَكَّرُونَ. (يونس 3).

VERILY, your Sustainer is God, who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness, governing all that exists. There is none that could intercede with Him unless He grants leave therefor. Thus is God, your Sustainer: worship, therefore, Him [alone]: will you not, then, keep this in mind? (Yunus 3).

3- In Verse 11:7:

وَهُوَ الَّذِي خَلَقَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضَ فِي سِتَّةِ أَيَّامٍ وَكَانَ عَرْشُهُ عَلَى الْمَاءِ لِيَبْلُوَكُمْ أَيُّكُمْ أَحْسَنُ عَمَلًا وَلَنْ تَلْتَ إِنتُكُمْ مَبْعُوثُونَ مِنْ بَعْدِ الْمَوْتِ لِيَقُولَنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا إِنْ هَذَا إِلَّا سِحْرٌ مُبِينٌ. (هود 7).

And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons; and [ever since He has willed to create life,] the throne of His almightiness has rested upon water. [God reminds you of your dependence on Him] in order to test you [and thus to make manifest] which of you is best in conduct. For thus it is: if thou sayest [unto men], "Behold, you shall be raised again after death!" - they who are bent on denying the truth are sure to answer, "This is clearly nothing but an enchanting delusion" (Hud 7).

4- In Verse 25:59:

الذي خلق السماوات والأرض وما بينهما في ستة أيام ثم استوى على العرش الرحمن فاسأل به خبيراً.
(الفرقان 59).

He who has created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness: the Most Gracious! Ask, then, about Him, [the] One who is [truly] aware. (Al-Furqan 59).

5- In Verse 32:4:

الله الذي خلق السماوات والأرض وما بينهما في ستة أيام ثم استوى على العرش ما لكم من دونه من ولي ولا شفيع أفلا تتذكرون. (السجدة 4).

IT IS GOD who has created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. You have none to protect you from God, and none to intercede for you [on Judgment Day]: will you not, then, bethink yourselves? (As-Sajda 4).

6- In Verse 50:38:

ولقد خلقنا السماوات والأرض وما بينهما في ستة أيام وما مسنا من لغوب. (ق 38).
and [who knows that] We have indeed created the heavens and the earth and all that is between them in six aeons, and [that] no weariness could ever touch Us. (Qaf 38).

7- And in Verse 57:4:

هو الذي خلق السماوات والأرض في ستة أيام ثم استوى على العرش يعلم ما يلج في الأرض وما يخرج منها وما ينزل من السماء وما يعرج فيها وهو معكم أين ما كنتم^{٩١} والله بما تعملون بصير. (الحديد 4).

He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. He knows all that enters the earth, and all that comes out of it, as well as all that descends from the skies, and all that ascends to them. And He is with you wherever you may be; and God sees all that you do. (Al-Hadid 4).

In the above verses, the translator, Muhammad Asad, translated the Arabic word 'ayyam' (days) into 'aeons.'⁹¹ Another translator, Ahmad Ali,

⁹¹ Asad, M. (1980) - *The Message of the Qur'an*.

translated it into 'spans of time'.⁹² And a third one, Shakir, translated it into 'periods of time'.⁹³

Upon comparing the Qur'anic creation account with the Biblical creation account, we see the following differences:

1. There is no explicit mention that the days of creation are 24-hour days. There is no mention of: '... And there was evening, and there was morning—the first day.', '... And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day.', ... etc. as we are told in the account of creation in Genesis. This is a clear case of a 'Miracle of Missing Misinformation' (MMM.)
2. In a subsequent section, the different meanings of 'day' (yawm in Arabic) are analyzed. It will be shown that the 'six-days' of creation indicate creation in six periods of time or six phases and not six 24-hour days.
3. There is no incorrect and illogical details to the order of creations of light, water, sun and moon, plants, fish, birds, or animals in the Qur'anic account. Another MMM.
4. There is no mention to the creation of Adam and Eve within the six days of the creation. The creation of Adam and Eve was an independent process.
5. There is no mention of a seventh day in which God rested. God is Omnipotent, He doesn't get tired, and doesn't need rest. This is explicitly declared in Verse 50:38 above.
6. There is no mention that creation has finished and stopped as implied in Gen. 2:1-3. As a matter of fact, we shall see from other verses in the Qur'an, that creation is continuing to this moment of time and will continue ad infinitum.

⁹² Ali, Ahmed (1988) - *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation*, Princeton Univ. Press.

⁹³ Shakir, M.H. - *The Holy Quran. English Translation of the Meanings*.

Aside from their differences with the Biblical accounts of creation, the above Qur'anic Creation Verses reveal to us the following important aspects:

- a) In five of the above verses (Verses 7:54, 10:3, 25:59, 32:4, and 57:4), we find the phrase 'استوى على العرش' immediately following the phrases of creation. This phrase is translated by the different translators in the following: He mounted on the Throne, He established Himself on the Throne, He assumed all power, He ascended the Throne of control, He sat Himself upon the Throne, or He rose over the Throne. These translations are not far from each other. They all portray an image of a God Who is in total control of His creation and is not detached from it. 'Ascending the Throne of Control' confirms the attributes of God as: The Sovereign, The Provider, The Sustainer, The Giver, The Protector, The Guardian, The Preserver, The Watchful, The All-Knowing, The All-Seeing, and The All-Hearing.
- b) Verse 11:7 above tells us that God's Throne is rested upon water. And in another verse, Verse 21:30, we read: "... and We made every living being out of water...". These verses reflect the importance of water to sustain life. It is interesting to note that modern-day scientists always look for signs of water in their explorations and search for life on other planets.⁹⁴
- c) The Qur'anic creation verses above imply that we are still living in the sixth day, i.e. in the sixth aeon. This may indicate that Day 7 that will follow will be the day-after or the end-of-times.
- d) An Omnipotent Creator has the power to create anything in an instant. The fact that the Qur'an tells us that the creation of the universe was over six periods is an indication that this creation is process based. Here, God created the initial conditions for the process 14 billion years ago. He created the initial material ex

⁹⁴ Encrenaz, T. (2007) - *Searching for Water in the Universe*, Springer.

nihilo, created time, established the laws of the universe, and initiated the Big Bang, and thus initiated the process of formation of the universe.

7.2 The Different Meanings of 'yawm' and 'ayyam' in the Qur'an:

The word 'yawm' (day) and its plural 'ayyam' (days) appeared in 367 verses in the Qur'an. In these verses, these words carried different meanings as follows:

- 182 times, they have meanings related to the hereafter, such as: Day of Judgement, Day of Resurrection, Day of Reckoning, Day of Recompence, Day of Gathering, Day of Distinction, Day of Final Decision, Awesome Day, ... etc.
- 151 times, they have the meaning: era, period, age, term, interval, or epoch.
- 21 times, they have the meaning of 24-hour day or days.
- 10 times, Creation Days, and
- 3 times, Special God Days.

The 3 Special God Days are days in which they have specific lengths of time as metaphors for 'a long time'. They appear in Verse 22:47 in which a day is like a thousand years:

ويستعجلونك بالعذاب ولن يخلف الله وعده وإن يوما عند ربك كآلف سنة مما تعدون. (الحج 47).
And [so, O Muhammad,] they challenge thee to hasten the coming upon them of [God's] chastisement: but God never fails to fulfill His promise - and, behold, in thy Sustainer's sight a day is like a thousand years of your reckoning. (Al-Hajj 47),

In Verse 23:113, a day is equal a thousand years:

يدبر الأمر من السماء إلى الأرض ثم يعرج إليه في يوم كان مقداره ألف سنة مما تعدون. (السجدة 5).
He governs all that exists, from the celestial space to the earth; and in the end all shall ascend unto Him [for judgment] on a Day the length whereof will be [like] a thousand years of your reckoning. (As-Sajda 5),

And in Verse 70:4, a day is equal to fifty thousand years:

تعرج الملائكة والروح إليه في يوم كان مقداره خمسين ألف سنة. (المعارج 4).

all the angels and all the inspiration [ever granted to man] ascend unto Him [daily,] in a day the length whereof is [like] fifty thousand years... (Al-Ma'arij 4)

The total number of verses in which 'yawm' and 'ayyam' mean 24-hour day or days is 21 verses (less than 6% of the total number of their occurrences.) These verses are mostly related to fasting in general, fasting certain number of days to offset certain sins or compensate incomplete ordinances, to specify certain days to perform Hajj duties, a respite time, or as metaphors of 'a short time'. They are Verses: 2:80, 2:184, 2:185, 2:196, 2:203, 2:259, 3:24, 3:41, 5:89, 7:163, 11:65, 18:19, 20:104, 22:28, 23:113, 26:155, 34:18, 40:49, 41:16, 62:9, and 69:7.

The 10 verses that have the Creation Days are Verses: 7:54, 10:3, 11:7, 25:59, 32:4, 41:9, 41:10, 41:12, 50:38, and 57:4. Some translators of the meaning of the Qur'an, such as Hilali and Khan⁹⁵, Maududi⁹⁶, Pickthall⁹⁷ and Yusuf Ali⁹⁸, used the literal translations of 'day' and 'days' for 'yawm' and 'ayyam.' Others, such as Muhammad Asad⁹⁹, Ahmad Ali¹⁰⁰, and Shakir¹⁰¹, translated them into aeon(s), span(s) of time, or period(s) of time, respectively. In all of these cases, however, all the translators are unanimous in the understanding that the Creation Days are not 24-hour days.

7.3 Miracle (Instant) Creation:

The Qur'an contains 8 verses that describe creation by the word 'kun' (Be). This is a miraculous instant creation, and it may be an essential first phase of the process-based creation. These verses are:

⁹⁵ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.

⁹⁶ Maududi, S.A. (1972) - *Tafhim-ul-Qur'an*.

⁹⁷ Pickthall, Mamaduke (1930) - *Meanings of Holy Qur'an In English*.

⁹⁸ Ali, Yusuf (1934) - *The Qur'an Translation*.

⁹⁹ Asad, Muhammad (1980) - *The Message of the Qur'an*.

¹⁰⁰ Ali, Ahmed (1988) - *Al-Qur'an. A Contemporary Translation*.

¹⁰¹ Shakir, M.H. - *The Holy Qur'an. English Translation of the Meanings*.

1. Verse 2:117:

بديع السماوات والأرض وإذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون. (البقرة 117).

The Originator is He of the heavens and the earth: and when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, "Be" -and it is. (Al-Baqara 117),

It is mentioned in a previous section that the creation of the universe (heavens and the earth) was process-based. However, God created the initial conditions by the word 'kun' (Be).

2. Verse 3:47:

قالت رب أنى يكون لي ولد ولم يمسنني بشر قال كذلك الله يخلق ما يشاء إذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون. (آل عمران 47).

Said she: "O my Sustainer! How can I have a son when no man has ever touched me?" [The angel] answered: "Thus it is: God creates what He wills when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, 'Be' - and it is. (Al-Imran 47),

This verse describes the miraculous creation of Jesus. Mary may have an egg in her uterus, and God caused this egg to be fertilized by the word 'kun' (Be). This initiated the process of creating Jesus without a father. In Sura#19 (Sura: Maryam), there are several verses that indicate that Mary witnessed the whole phases of pregnancy and child delivery like any other woman. So, the miraculous creation of Jesus was in the initial fertilization of the egg without semen from a male.

3. Verse 3:59:

إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون. (آل عمران 59).

Verily, in the sight of God, the nature of Jesus is as the nature of Adam, whom He created out of dust and then said unto him, "Be" - and he is. (Al-Imran 59),

This verses tells us that the creation of Jesus is similar to the creation of Adam; their creations were both miraculously initiated by the word 'kun' (Be), but then went through the same process of fetus formation, pregnancy, and delivery. The verse indirectly rejects the notion that Adam was first molded into the shape of a full grown man and then brought to life as a full grown man.

The second part of the verse says that both of Jesus and Adam were created of 'تراب' which is translated into 'dust'; a better translation would have been 'soil', or 'earth.' In any case, this affirms that both of Adam and Jesus were normal human beings whose composition was of the same components that are found on earth: minerals, organic material, and water. In other words, they were not godly or alien beings.

4. Verse 6:73:

وهو الذي خلق السماوات والأرض بالحق ويوم يقول كن فيكون قوله الحق وله الملك يوم ينفخ في الصور عالم الغيب والشهادة وهو الحكيم الخبير. (الأنعام 73).

And He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with [an inner] truth - and whenever He says, "Be," His word comes true; and His will be the dominion on the Day when the trumpet [of resurrection] is blown. He knows all that is beyond the reach of a created being's perception, as well as all that can be witnessed by a creature's senses or mind: for He alone is truly wise, all-aware. (Al-An'am 73),

This verse tells us that on the Day of Resurrection, the people will be resurrected by the word 'kun' (Be).

5. Verse 16:40:

إنما قولنا لشيء إذا أردناه أن نقول له كن فيكون. (النحل 40).

Whenever We will anything to be, We but say unto it Our word "Be" - and it is. (An-Nahl 40),

In Verse 16:38 that precedes the above one, we read that the disbelievers say: "Never will God raise from the dead anyone who has died!" Verse 16:40 responds to this denial by asserting that resurrection of the dead will be by the word 'kun' (Be).

6. Verse 19:35:

ما كان لله أن يتخذ من ولد سبحانه إذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون. (مريم 35).

It is not conceivable that God should have taken unto Himself a son: limitless is He in His glory! When He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it "Be" -and it is! (Maryam 35),

This verse dismisses the claim that Jesus is the son of God, and asserts that Jesus was another human being who was initially created by the word 'kun' (Be).

7. Verse 36:82:

إنما أمره إذا أراد شيئا أن يقول له كن فيكون. (يس 82).

His Being alone is such that when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, "Be" — and it is. (Ya-Sin 82),

This verse should be examined in the context of the 11 verses that precede it. These verses describe several acts of creation, and they end by asserting that the One Who initially created all these things is capable to create and resurrect people again on the Day of Resurrection. Then, Verse 36:82 asserts that when God wills a thing to be, He just says unto it, 'kun' (Be) - and it is.

8. And Verse 40:68:

هو الذي يحيي ويميت فإذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون. (غافر 68).

It is He who grants life and deals death; and when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, "Be" - and it is. (Ghafir 68).

Every minute, many life forms (humans, animals and other life forms) come into existence, and many die and cease to exist. All these happens by the will of God, and the word 'kun' (Be). God is the Life-Giver, and He is the Life-Taker.

7.4 The Multiple Processes of Creation:

In Surah#41, Verses 9-12, the Qur'an describes several processes related to the creation of the universe.

قل أننكم لتكفرون بالذي خلق الأرض في يومين وتجعلون له أندادا ذلك رب العالمين (9) وجعل فيها رواسي من فوقها وبارك فيها وقدر فيها أقواتها في أربعة أيام سواء للسائلين (10) ثم استوى إلى السماء وهي دخان فقال لها وللأرض ائتيا طوعا أو كرها قالتا أتينا طائعين (11) فقضاهن سبع سموات في يومين وأوحى في كل سماء أمرها وزينا السماء الدنيا بمصابيح وحفظا ذلك تقدير العزيز العليم (12) (فصلت 9-12)

9. SAY: "Would you indeed deny Him who has created the earth in two aeons? And do you claim that there is any power that could rival Him, the Sustainer of all the worlds?"

10. For He [it is who, after creating the earth,] placed firm mountains on it, [towering] above its surface, and bestowed [so many] blessings on it, and equitably apportioned its means of subsistence to all who would seek it: [and all this He created] in four aeons.

11. And He [it is who] applied His design to the skies, which were [yet but] smoke; and He [it is who] said to them and to the earth, "Come [into being], both of you, willingly or unwillingly!" - to which both responded, "We do come in obedience."

12. And He [it is who] decreed that they become seven heavens in two aeons, and imparted unto each heaven its function. And We adorned the skies nearest to the earth with lights, and made them secure: such is the ordaining of the Almighty, the All-Knowing. (Fussilat 9-12).

We have discussed before that the creation of the universe in six phases extended over 13.8 billion years according to scientific estimate. Within this period, Verse 41:9 above describes another process in which the earth was created in two phases. This is followed in Verse 41:10 by the erection of firm mountains and the creation of sustenance (water and plants) in four phases. So, the total phases of the creation of the earth and the erection of the mountains and the creation of earth's sustenance is 6 phases.

Then, Verse 41:12 describe another process in which the seven heavens were created in two phases.

Some readers of the above verses may mistakenly assume that these verses describe a single process, and add the number of days mentioned in the verses to find that they total eight days, and hence consider this a contradiction to the creation of the universe in six days. But, in reality, these verses describe multiple processes that are separate from the creation of the universe process as will be demonstrated below.

Figure (7.1) illustrates the Qur'anic view of the different creation processes. The upper timeline is the creation of the universe in six days. These days are designated U1, U2, U3, U4, U5 & U6. The start of U1 is the 'Big Bang'. The total duration of the six days represents the age of the universe, and it

is 13.8 billion years as cosmology's best estimate (the Qur'an does not mention this duration.) The verses in the Qur'an that relate to this process (discussed in Section 7.1) are given on top of the timeline.

The middle timeline is composed of two parts: the creation of the earth in two days (Verse 41:9), and the creation of the mountains and earth sustenance in four days (Verse 41:10.). The creation days of these two processes are designated E1, E2 ,E3, E4, E5 and E6.

Finally, the creation of the seven heavens in two days, H1 and H2 (Verse 41:12), is shown in the lower timeline. The start of the H1 is after the end of E2 as indicated in the verse.

It should be noted that the bars that represent the different creation days in the three timelines are not drawn to scale. The purpose of figure is to show the three creation processes relative to each other and that they are separate processes.

Figure (7.1) demonstrates that the Qur'anic view of the creation of the universe is in full agreement with science. The Qur'an is not a book of science or cosmology. Therefore, you will not find any verses that discuss the details about the age of the universe or the age of the earth; these details are left to be decided by scientific methods and discovery.

In a the following chapter, the creation of the seven heavens is discussed in more detail and a model is proposed for the seven heavens.

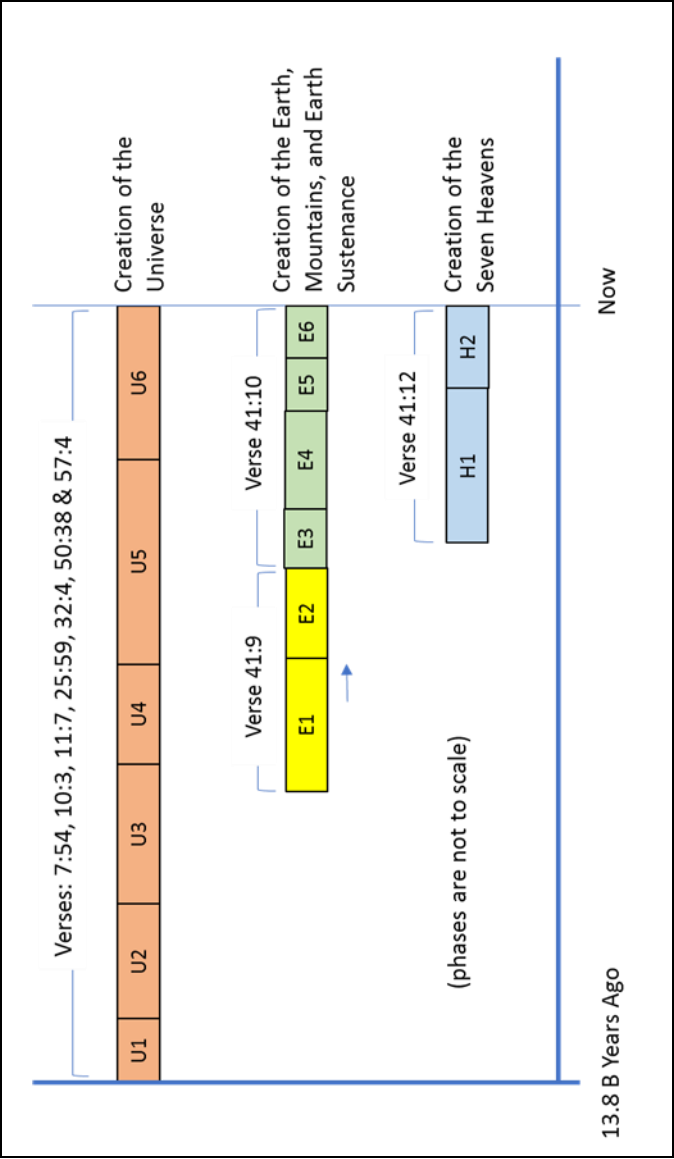


Figure 7.1: The Qur'anic View of the Different Creation Processes

7.5 The Big Bang, The Expanding Universe:

The Qur'an contains other verses that relate closely to the creation of the universe. Verse 21:30 describes a process at the beginning of creation that closely resembles the 'Big Bang' theory of the origin of the universe.

أولم ير الذين كفروا أن السماوات والأرض كانتا رتقا ففتقناهما وجعلنا من الماء كل شيء حي أفلا يؤمنون.
(الأنبياء 30).

ARE, THEN, they who are bent on denying the truth not aware that the heavens and the earth were [once] one single entity, which We then parted asunder? – and [that] We made out of water every living thing? Will they not, then, [begin to] believe? (Al-Anbiya 30)

The first part of the above verse states that the heavens and earth were once one single entity and then this entity was parted asunder to start the creation of the universe. This initial breakup or separation was not an explosion, but a process in which the components of an entity were teared and separated from each other. This is exactly the core of the Big Bang theory.¹⁰²

The expansion of the universe is an essential ingredient of the Big Bang theory. Amazingly, there is a verse in the Qur'an, Verse 51:47, that tells us that the universe is steadily expanding:

والسمااء بنيناها بأيد وإنا لموسعون. (الذاريات 47).
AND IT IS We who have built the universe with [Our creative] power; and, verily, it is We who are steadily expanding it. (Adh-Dhariyat 47)

Stephen Hawking, in his book, 'A Brief History of Time', says, "The discovery that the universe is expanding was one of the great intellectual revolutions of the 20th century."¹⁰³ The Qur'an mentioned the expansion of the universe in the early 7th century.

¹⁰² See for example: Chapman, A. (2018) - *Comets, Cosmology and the Big Bang*. A History of Astronomy from Edmond Halley to Edwin Hubble, Lion Hudson Ltd.

¹⁰³ Hawking, S. (1988) - *A Brief History of Time*.

Another verse that relates to the Big Bang theory is Verse 41:11 that tells us that the universe was in a form like smoke, and God commanded it to form into the heaven and the earth.

ثم استوى إلى السماء وهي دخان فقال لها وللأرض ائتيا طوعا أو كرها قالتا أتينا طائعين. (فصلت 11).

And He [it is who] applied His design to the skies, which were [yet but] smoke; and He [it is who] said to them and to the earth, "Come [into being], both of you, willingly or unwillingly!" - to which both responded, "We do come in obedience." (Fussilat 11)

The above verse is in full agreement with science that tells us that after the Big Bang, the matter in the universe was uniformly distributed. Then slightly denser regions attracted nearby matter and started forming gas cloud (or smoke clouds). These clouds then condensed and formed the stars, galaxies, and the other astronomical structures observable today.

Interestingly, science has no explanation to what made these clouds of matter coalesce and start forming the galaxies. The above verse tells us the it was the Will of God behind all creation.

8- The Seven Heavens

8.1 What the Qur'an Says:

The Qur'an describes the creation of another cosmological entity, The Seven Heavens, that was not mentioned in the Bible. The creation of Seven Heavens is mentioned in the Qur'an in nine different verses which is an indication to their utmost importance. These Verses are: 2:29, 17:44, 23:86, 41:12, 65:12, 67:3, 71:15, 78:12, and 23:17.

1- Verse 2:29:

هو الذي خلق لكم ما في الأرض جميعاً ثم استوى إلى السماء فسواهن سبع سماوات وهو بكل شيء عليم.
(البقرة 29).

He it is who has created for you all that is on earth, and has applied His design to the heavens and fashioned them into seven heavens; and He alone has full knowledge of everything. (Al-Baqarah 29).

The above verse tells us that the creation of the Seven Heavens started after the start of the creation of the earth. This fact was discussed in the previous chapter, and is depicted in Fig. (7.1).

2- Verse 17:44:

تسبح له السماوات السبع والأرض ومن فيهن وإن من شيء إلا يسبح بحمده ولكن لا تفقهون تسبيحهم إنه كان حليماً غفوراً. (الإسراء 44).

The seven heavens extol His limitless glory, and the earth, and all that they contain; and there is not a single thing but extols His limitless glory and praise: but you [O men] fail to grasp the manner of their glorifying Him! Verily, He is forbearing, much-forgiving! (Al-Isra 44).

The above verse includes a Qur'anic metaphor that when an inanimate object follows certain natural laws perpetually, it is actually worshipping God. So, when a celestial body spins around itself, or moves in an orbit around a star, these are all acts of worshipping; it is extolling God and prostrating to Him. The above verse asserts that everything, the Seven Heavens, the earth, and all that they contain, all of that worship God by following their natural laws perpetually.

There are several other verses that contain the same metaphor described above (that inanimate object worship God by following its natural laws

perpetually.) These are Verses: 13:13, 13:15, 16:49, 22:18, 24:41, 38:18, 59:24, 62:1, and 64:1.

The phrase *'and all that they contain'* in the above verse indicates that the Seven Heavens contain stars and planets and other celestial objects like our universe. They are also probably populated with different life forms; all of which extols the glory of God.

3- Verse 23:86:

قل من رب السماوات السبع ورب العرش العظيم. (المؤمنون 86).

Say: "Who is (the) Lord of the seven heavens, and (the) Lord of the Great Throne?" (Al-Mu'minun 86).¹⁰⁴

The above verse contains the phrase *'العرش العظيم'* translated into 'The Great Throne. The Great Throne is the Throne of God Almighty. The rhetorical question in the verse puts the Seven Heavens in an almost equal footing with The Great Throne. This glorifies the Seven Heavens and indicates that they are more grandeur than our universe.

4- Verse 41:12:

فقدأهمن سبع سماوات في يومين وأوحى في كل سماء أمرها وزينا السماء الدنيا بمصابيح وحفظا ذلك تقدير العزيز العليم. (فصلت 12).

And He [it is who] decreed that they become seven heavens in two aeons, and imparted unto each heaven its function. And We adorned the skies nearest to the earth with lights, and made them secure: such is the ordaining of the Almighty, the All-Knowing. (Fussilat 12)

The above verse was examined in Section 7.4, and it indicates that the start of the creation of the Seven Heavens was after the start of the creation of the earth as depicted in Fig. (7.1). The verse tells us also that each of the Seven Heavens has its own laws, material, celestial bodies, and life forms. Furthermore, the verse tells us that all the stars we observe in the night sky are 'lamps' in the lower heaven (Heaven1.) This means that our universe is Heaven1.

¹⁰⁴ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an.

5- Verse 65:12:

الله الذي خلق سبع سماوات ومن الأرض مثلهن ينتزل الأمر بينهن لتعلموا أن الله على كل شيء قدير وأن الله قد أحاط بكل شيء علماً. (الطلاق 12).

GOD is He who has created seven heavens, and, like them, [the many aspects] of the earth. Through all of them flows down from on high, unceasingly, His [creative] will, so that you might come to know that God has the power to will anything, and that God encompasses all things with His knowledge. (At-Talaq 12).

The above verse tells us that similar to the creation of the Seven Heavens, there exists multiple earths. This indicates that each of the Seven Heavens is populated with its own stars, planets and celestial bodies.

Some Muslim scholars propose the existence of duplicate planets to our Earth, and that these planets are populated with people counterparts to every one of us. The second part of the verse mentions that Allah's commands cover all these heavens and planets, and it may support the hypothesis of duplicate creation.

6- Verse 67:3:

الذي خلق سبع سماوات طباقا ما ترى في خلق الرحمن من تفاوت فارجع البصر هل ترى من فطور. (المالك 3)

Who has created the seven heavens one above another, you can see no fault in the creations of the Most Beneficent. Then look again: "Can you see any rifts?" (Al-Mulk 3).¹⁰⁵

The latter part of the verse asks us to examine these heavens with our vision. This may indicate that the Seven Heavens are observable (or, should be observable) using the scientific tools and methods developed by man. If the Seven Heavens are not observable using current technology, then the verse predicts that man will be able to develop, at some time in the future, the technology (or the scientific theory) that enables him to observe or detect these Seven Heavens.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

7- Verse 71:15:

ألم تروا كيف خلق الله سبع سماوات طباقاً. (نوح 15).

*See you not how Allah has created the seven heavens one above another, (Nuh 15)*¹⁰⁶.

The above verse is similar to Verse 67:3. Here, we also have Seven Heavens that are one above another. The rhetorical question in the verse starts with the phrase 'See you not...' This may also be an indication to the observability or detectability of the Seven Heavens.

8- Verse 78:12:

وبنينا فوقكم سبعا شدادا. (النبأ 12).

*And We have built above you seven strong (heavens), (An-Naba' 12)*¹⁰⁷.

The above verse use the word 'شدادا' which means 'strong' of 'solid'. This indicates that the Seven Heaven should have well-defined structures and boundaries.

9- And Verse 23:17:

ولقد خلقنا فوقكم سبع طرائق وما كنا عن الخلق غافلين. (المؤمنون 17).

*We have indeed fashioned above you seven paths. Never were We unaware of the task of creation. (Al-Mu'minun 17)*¹⁰⁸.

The translation by Maududi is adopted here in which he translated the Arabic phrase 'سبع طرائق' into 'seven paths'. Pickthall also translated it into 'seven paths'.¹⁰⁹ And another translator, Ahmed Ali, translated it into 'seven highways'.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Ibid.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Maududi, S.A. (1972) - *Tafhim-ul-Qur'an*.

¹⁰⁹ Pickthall, Mamaduke (1930) - *Meanings of Holy Qur'an In English*.

¹¹⁰ Ali, Ahmed (1988) - *Al-Qur'an: A Contemporary Translation*, Princeton Univ. Press.

8.2 Characteristics of the Seven Heavens:

So, the questions to be answered are the following: What are these Seven Heavens? and Where are they?

To answer these questions, we need to look first for clues from the above verses about the characteristics and features of these Seven Heavens. Here are some these features of the Seven Heavens that are inferred from the above verses:

- **Feature#1:** The creation of the Seven Heavens may be a greater feat than the creation of the universe in six days. This is because the former creation is repeated in nine verses, whereas the latter is repeated in seven verses. This feature can also be inferred from Verse 23:86 above in which the Seven Heavens are put in an almost equal footing with The Great Throne.
- **Feature#2:** The creation of the Seven Heavens started after the start of the creation of earth. This is inferred from Verse 2:29 and Verse 41:12 above. This is depicted in Fig. (7.1) as discussed in Section 7.4.
- **Feature#3:** The Seven Heavens have well-defined structures and boundaries. This is inferred from Verse 78:12. There are also several other verses that indicate that the heavens have strong well-defined structures, such as: Verses 2:22 (*... and the sky a canopy...*), Verse 40:64 (*... and the sky a canopy...*), and Verses 79:27-28 (*Are you more difficult to create than the heaven which He has built? High has He reared its vault and formed it in accordance with what it was meant to be.*)
- **Feature#4:** The Seven Heavens are most likely layered on top of each other. This is inferred from Verse 71:15 and Verse 67:3.
- **Feature#5:** Each of the Seven Heavens contains stars, planet and other celestial objects similar to our universe, and they also populated with different life forms. This is inferred from Verse 65:12 and Verse 17:44.

- **Feature#6:** Our universe is the lower heaven (Heaven1). This is inferred from Verse 41:12.
- **Feature#7:** The Seven Heavens are detectable (or, should be detectable) using the scientific tools and methods developed by man. This is inferred from Verse 67:3 '*you can see...*' and Verse 71:15 '*See you not how...*'
- **Feature#8:** There may exist paths that facilitate the movement between the Seven Heavens. This is inferred from Verse 23:17 above. It is also corroborated by Verse 51:7 which says 'والسماوات ذات الحيك', and is translated into 'By the heaven full of paths.' These paths could be understood to mean the orbits in which the different celestial objects move. But it could also be understood to mean 'wormholes' that link the Seven Heavens to each other.

8.3 Current Models of the Seven Heavens:

Many Muslim scholars have attempted to answer the two basic questions related to the Seven Heavens: What and Where are these Seven Heavens? In this section, we examine some of these attempts.

A. The Seven Heavens are the Layers of the Atmosphere:

Earth's atmosphere is divided into five main layers: the exosphere, the thermosphere, the mesosphere, the stratosphere and the troposphere. Within these five main layers, several secondary layers could be distinguished. These are; the ozone layer, the ionosphere, the homosphere, the heterosphere, and the planetary boundary layer.

So how many layers are in the atmosphere? The answer could be 5, if we restrict these layer to the main layers of the atmosphere. It could be 7, if we add the ozone layer and the ionosphere to the five main layers. Or, it could be 10, if we consider the main layers in addition to all of the other secondary layers.

As for the proposition that the Seven Heavens are the layers of the atmosphere, it satisfies **Feature#4** that tells us that the Seven Heaves are

layered on top of each other. It also satisfies **Feature#2**, for the atmosphere was formed in its stable form well after the creation of the earth. It also satisfies **Feature#7**, because the atmospheric layers are detectable and measurable using current technology.

This model, however, does not satisfy the other features. To start with, the earth atmosphere is a small part of the earth system, and its creation cannot be considered more grandeur than the creation of the universe as called for by **Feature#1**. Secondly, the atmospheric layers are not strong structures and do not have clear boundaries as required by **Feature#3**. Thirdly, **Feature#5** and **Feature#6** are not satisfied because the earth atmosphere does not include within it any stars, planets, or celestial bodies. And finally, **Feature#8** is not satisfied for there are no paths or highways within the atmospheric layers.

Based on the above, the proposition that the Seven Heavens are the atmospheric layers is rejected.

B. The Seven Heavens are Seven Planets:

In this proposition, the Seven Heavens are proposed to be seven planets (beside earth) that revolve around the sun. Namely, they are: Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune.

This proposition is also rejected for it satisfies **Feature#3** and **Feature#7** only, but it does not satisfy **Feature#1**, **Feature#2**, **Feature#4**, **Feature#5**, **Feature#6**, or **Feature#8**.

C. The Seven Heavens are the Seven Phases of the Big Bang Timeline:

According to the Big Bang Theory, the universe evolved to be the way it is today over several phases as follows:

1. From $t = 0$ (the beginning of time) to $t = 10^{-32}$ sec., we have the start of the Big Bang and the universe was in pure energy form; it was very dense and very hot.
2. Between $t = 10^{-32}$ sec. to $t = 10^{-4}$ sec., we have the post-inflation phase. In this phase, the universe was a 'soup' of quarks,

electrons, and other particles. The temperature was still very hot in the range of 10^{27}°C .

3. Between $t = 10^{-4}$ sec. to $t = 1$ sec., we had a rapid cooling phase in which the temperature dropped to about 10^{13}°C . In this phase, protons and neutrons started to form.
4. Between $t = 1$ sec. to $t = 3$ min., cooling continued and the temperature dropped to 10^8°C . This allowed the nuclei of the atoms to start forming. But the temperature was still too hot for the atoms to form. The charged electrons in this phase prevented light from escaping.
5. Between $t = 3$ min. to $t = 300,000$ yrs., the temperature dropped to about $10,000^{\circ}\text{C}$. Electrons combined with protons and neutrons to form atoms, mostly hydrogen and helium. Light was allowed to escape and to shine.
6. Between $t = 300,000$ yrs. to $t = 1$ billion yrs., the temperature dropped to -200°C . Gravity made hydrogen and helium gas coalesce to form the giants clouds that will become galaxies. Smaller chumps of gas collapsed to form the first stars.
7. Between $t = 1$ billion yrs. to $t = 3$ billion yrs., the first galaxies and the first stars appeared.
8. Between $t = 3$ billion yrs. to $t = 9$ billion yrs., galaxies clustered together under gravity. The first stars died and spewed heavy elements into space; those elements formed new stars and planets. By the end of this phase, the sun and solar system started to take shape.

A diagram that depicts the Big Bang timeline is shown in Fig. (8.1). The figure shows the 8 distinct phases described above. There are other diagrams that show the evolution of the universe in 7 phases only. In these latter diagrams, the last two phases are combined in one phase.

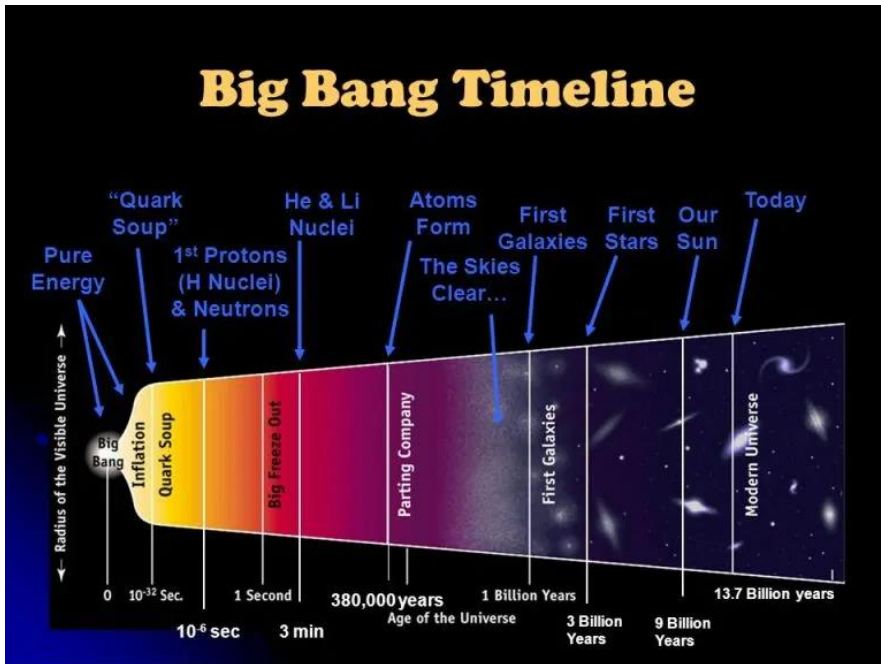


Figure 8.1: The Big Bang Timeline

Can the phases of the evolution of the universe be a satisfactory model to the Seven Heavens mentioned in the Qur'an?

It is apparent from the above that the Big Bang Timeline model represents the evolution of our universe; so, we are not talking about a creation that is more splendid or magnificent than the creation of our universe. This means **Feature#1** is not satisfied.

Secondly, in this model, we are not talking about seven physical entities that exist today. The model shows us how our universe (the same entity) looked like over different periods of time. **Therefore, Feature#2, Feature#3, and Feature#4** are not satisfied.

Feature#5 is not satisfied as well because the stars, planets, and other celestial objects start appearing when the universe was 1 billion years old.

Before that, it was in the form of pure energy, and then evolved to become basic particles, and then further evolved to be in the form of clouds of hydrogen and helium atoms. This means that stars, planets, and other celestial object did not exist in phase 1 through phase 5.

Based on the above, the Big Bang phases can't be considered a satisfactory model of the Seven Heavens.

8.4 A Proposed New Model of the Seven Heavens:

Figure (8.2) shows the new proposed model of the Seven Heavens. In this model, the smallest circle represents the 1st Heaven (Heaven1) which is our universe. Figure (8.3) shows an artist's depiction of our universe. Heaven1 is the lowest heaven and it contains all the stars in the sky (and many that we don't see.)

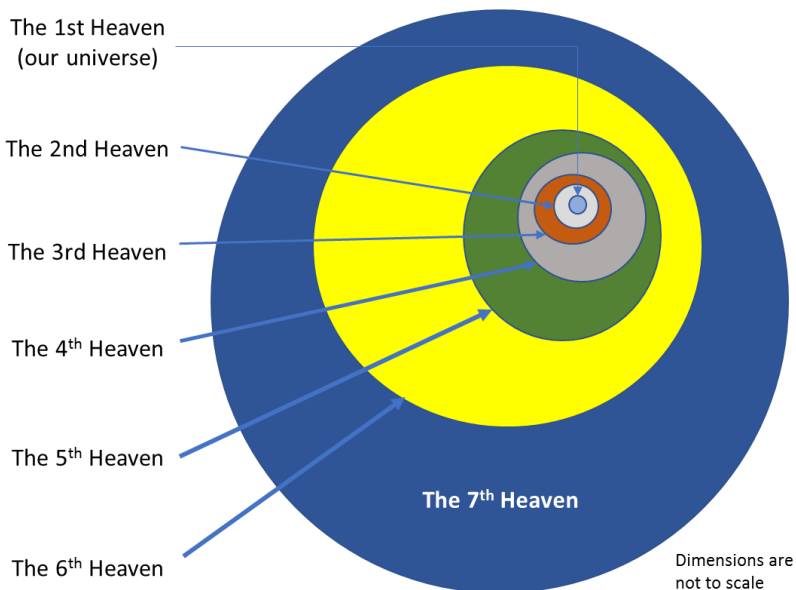


Figure 8.2: A Proposed Model of the Seven Heavens

The second inner circle in Fig. (8.2) represents the outer boundary of the 2nd heaven or Heaven2. Heaven2 does not encapsulate our universe only; it contains many universes (Heaven1s) like our own, may be billions of them. This is illustrated in Fig. (8.4).

The third circle represents the outer boundary of Heaven3, which in turn contains billions of Heaven2s as illustrated in Fig. (8.5). This continues until we reach the final heaven, Heaven7, which also contains billions of Heaven6s.

This model introduces a creation feat of such grandeur that is beyond imagination. We must recall that our planet, earth, is a tiny entity in the universe. In this model, our universe is a tiny entity inside Heaven2, which in turn is a tiny entity inside Heaven3, and so on.



Figure 8.3: An Artist's Depiction of Our Universe (Heaven1)

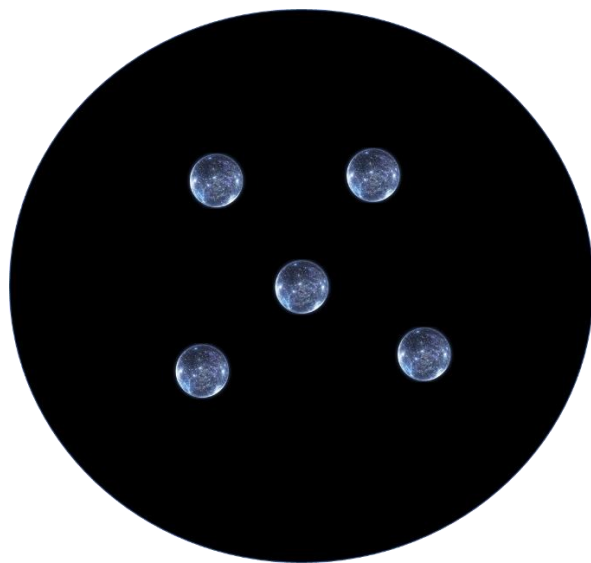


Figure 8.4: Heaven2 Contains Billions of Heaven1s

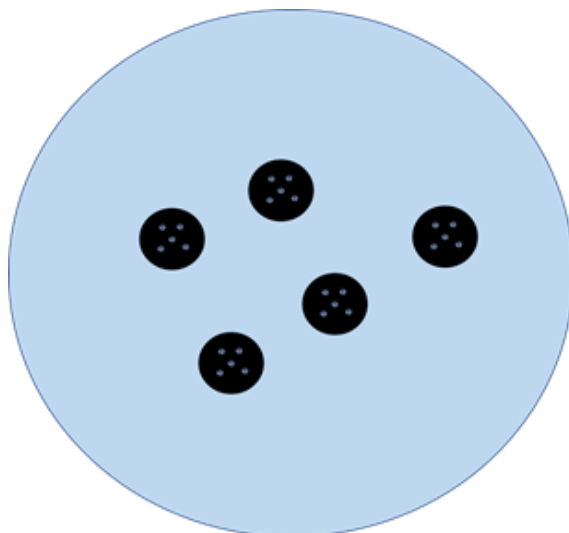


Figure 8.5: Heaven3 Contains Billions of Heaven2s

It is obvious that the proposed model satisfies **Feature#1** for we have here a creation feat with a grandeur that it can be considered in equal footing with The Great Throne.

Feature#2 is also satisfied if we consider our universe, Heaven1, to be the oldest entity in the model. As more universes were created, Heaven2 started to form. And as more the likes of Heaven2 were created and formed, Heaven3 started to take shape, and so on. So, in this model, Heaven2 is younger than Heaven1, and Heaven3, is younger than Heaven2. As we reach Heaven7, it is possible that it started to take shape within the last 3-4 billion years, i.e. after the creation of earth and its sustenance, which satisfies **Feature#2**.

As we go over the other features of the Seven Heavens, we can see that the proposed model clearly satisfies **Feature#3, Feature#4, Feature#5, and Feature#6**. As to **Feature#8** which indicates the existence of paths or highways in the heavens, even science is not certain about the nature of a wormhole. It is, till now, a speculative structure that links between two points in spacetime as a special solution of Einstein field equations.

The only feature that is not satisfied in the proposed model in a definite way is **Feature#7**, which states that the Seven Heavens are detectable (or, should be detectable) using the scientific tools and methods developed by man. Current technologies can't detect anything beyond our universe. The proposed model suggests vast distances beyond anything that can be imagined by human mind. No future technology is expected to detect these dimensions. The only way to detect the other six heavens beyond Heaven1 is through a new cosmic theory, and a mathematical model that takes into consideration the influence of the outer heavens on Heaven1.

9- The Earth Systems

9.1 A Spherical Earth:

It is incredible that we are in the 21st century, and there are many people who still believe that the earth is flat!¹¹¹ In the Qur'an, there are several verses that indicate that the earth is round, not flat. In the following, we discuss some of these verses.

1- Verse 79:30:

This verse states that God created the earth in an egg-shape similar to a baker who shapes a dough in a ball:

والأرض بعد ذلك دحاهها. (النازعات 30).

And afterwards He shaped the earth into an egg-shape (like a baker who shapes the dough into egg-shape.) (An-Nazi'at 30).¹¹²

On this, Zakir Naik, a famous Muslim scholar, writes:

"The earth is not exactly round like a ball, but geo-spherical, i.e. it is flattened at the poles. [Verse 79:30] contains a description of the earth's shape. The Arabic word for egg here is 'dahaahaa' which means an ostrich-egg. The shape of an ostrich-egg resembles the geo-spherical shape of the earth. Thus the Qur'an correctly describes the shape of the earth, though the prevalent notion when the Qur'an was revealed was that the earth was flat."¹¹³

The Arabic dictionaries describe the verb 'دحا' 'daha' as shaping an object in an egg-shape like a baker who shapes the dough in an egg-shape.¹¹⁴ Figure (9.1) shows an egg-shaped dough as it is formed by a baker. This demonstrates the incredible accuracy of the Qur'anic choice of the word 'daha' to describe the formation of the earth in its observable shape.

¹¹¹ See for example: Garwood, C. (2007) - *Flat Earth; The History of an Infamous Idea*, Pan Books.

¹¹² This translation is based on Naik's comment that followed.

¹¹³ Naik, Z. - *The Qur'an and Modern Science - Compatible or Incompatible*, p. 9.

¹¹⁴ See for example: <https://www.almaany.com/ar/dict/ar-ar/>



Figure 9.1: A Baker Shaping a Dough in an Egg Shape

2. Verse 39:5:

خلق السماوات والأرض بالحق يكور الليل على النهار ويكور النهار على الليل وسخر الشمس والقمر كل يجري لأجل مسمى ألا هو العزيز الغفار. (الزمر 5).

He it is who has created the heavens and the earth in accordance with [an inner] truth. He causes the night to flow into the day, and causes the day to flow into the night; and He has made the sun and the moon subservient [to His laws], each running its course for a term set [by Him]. Is not He the Almighty, the All-Forgiving? (Az-Zumar 5).

The above verse is composed of several parts; each one conveys a certain fact. What concerns us here is the second part of the verse, in which, the Arabic verb 'يكور' *'yukawwir'* is used to describe the flow of the night over a spherical object that is in the daytime, and the subsequent flow of the day over the same spherical object that is in the nighttime. The rotational motion described here is like rolling a turban around a head, or wrapping the bandage around an injured limb, which clearly indicates that the verse talks about an object that is round in shape.

3. Verse 31:29:

ألم تر أن الله يولج الليل في النهار ويولج النهار في الليل وسخر الشمس والقمر كل يجري إلى أجل مسمى وأن الله بما تعملون خبير. (لقمان 29).

See you not (O Muhammad SAW) that Allah merges the night into the day, and merges the day into the night, and has subjected the sun and

*the moon, each running its course for a term appointed; and that Allah is All-Aware of what you do. (Luqman 29)*¹¹⁵

The above verse uses the Arabic verb 'يرلج' which is translated into 'merge' to describe how darkness overflow light, and how light overflow darkness. This merging of the night into the day portrays a gradual change of the day into nighttime, and the subsequent merging of the day into the night portrays gradual change of the night into daytime. This gradual change is a characteristic of a spherical object as it rotates in front of a source of light. Had the earth been flat and the sun started to rise, the whole surface of the earth will immediately turn into daytime, and the change will not be gradual. Also, when the sun goes down, the whole surface of a flat earth will immediately go into nighttime; it will not be gradual.

4. Verse 36:37:

وآية لهم الليل نسلخ منه النهار فإذا هم مظلمون. (يس 37).

And [of Our sway over all that exists] they have a sign in the night: We withdraw from it the [light of] day - and lo! they are in darkness. (Ya-Sin 37).

In the above verse, we find the Arabic verb 'نسلخ', which literally translates into 'to skin' the skin of an animal. So, the verse describes the flow of darkness over earth as light disappears with the rotation of the earth as similar to skinning the skin of an animal. This skinning is a gradual process that starts at some place and progresses in one direction to uncover what is beneath the skin. This progression of darkness over some areas on Earth (and the simultaneous progression of light over the areas on the other side of the planet) is a characteristics of a spherical object rotating in front of a source of light.

¹¹⁵ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.

9.2 The Motions of the Celestial Bodies:

There are many verses in the Qur'an that describe the motion of the Earth, the Sun, and the Moon.

1. Verse 21:33:

One verse in Sura#21 describes four celestial motions. It is Verse 21:33.

وهو الذي خلق الليل والنهار والشمس والقمر كل في فلك يسبحون. (الأنبياء 33).
and [fail to see that] it is He who has created the night and the day and the sun and the moon - all of them floating through space! (Al-Anbiya 33)

The first part of the verse says: 'God created the night and the day'. This alludes to the spinning of the Earth around its axis which causes the night to follow the day and the day to follow the night. Then, the second part of the verse says: 'all of them'; this point to the Earth, the Moon and the Sun that were mentioned in the verse. Then 'floating through space' means three additional motions: the Earth floating in an orbit around the Sun in one year, the Moon floating in an orbit around the earth in one lunar month, and the Sun along with the whole Solar system floating in an orbit around the center of Milky Way Galaxy. In this last motion, science estimated that the Sun travels through space at roughly 240 km per second, and takes approximately 225-250 million years to complete one revolution around the center of our Milky Way Galaxy.

2. Verses 36:37-40:

وأية لهم الليل نسلخ منه النهار فإذا هم مظلمون (37) والشمس تجري لمستقر لها ذلك تقدير العزيز العليم (38) والقمر قدرناه منازل حتى عاد كالعرجون القديم (39) لا الشمس ينبغي لها أن تدرك القمر ولا الليل سابق النهار وكل في فلك يسبحون (40). (يس 37-40).

37. *And [of Our sway over all that exists] they have a sign in the night: We withdraw from it the [light of] day - and lo! they are in darkness.*
 38. *And [they have a sign in] the sun: it runs in an orbit of its own [and] that is laid down by the will of the Almighty, the All-Knowing;*
 39. *and [in] the moon, for which We have determined phases [which it must traverse] till it becomes like an old date-stalk, dried-up and curved:*
 40. *[and] neither may the sun overtake the moon, nor can the night usurp the time of day, since all of them float through space [in accordance with Our laws]. (Ya-Sin 37-40.)*

Verse 36:37 was discussed in Sec. 9.1 as alluding to the sphericity of the Earth. In the context of this section, this verse also describes the spinning of the Earth around its axis as day changes to night and night changes to day.

Then, Verse 36:38 says 'والشمس تجري لمستقر لها' which describes the motion of the Sun in an orbit around the center of the Milky Way Galaxy.

Next, Verse 36:39 describes the motion of the Moon in an orbit around Earth. This motion is described as causing the sequential phases of the Moon that is repeated every lunar month as the Moon starts as a New Moon, and then becomes a Waxing Crescent, and then the First Quarter, and then a Waxing Gibbous, and then a Full Moon, and then a Waning Gibbous, and then the Last Quarter, and finally a Waning Crescent. And then, the cycle repeats again with the New Moon.

Verse 36:40 is composed of three parts. In the few moments before a solar eclipse, an observer from earth with no knowledge of astronomy may think that the Moon is going to collide with the Sun as the apparent distance between them become smaller. The first part of this verse assures us that the Sun and the Moon will not overtake each other. Today, we know that the Moon is a satellite to Earth; and they both orbit the Sun at an average distance of 149.6 million km.

In a relay race, the racers from the same team do not compete against each other. Imagine two racers from the same team running a relay race of 100 meters. The first runner may run 51 meters before handing the baton to the second racer; then the second racer has to run the remaining 49 meters. If the first racer ran 48 meters only and handed the baton early to the second runner, the second runner has to run the remaining 52 meters to complete the race. The second part of this verse tells us this exact fact that the day and the night are members of the same team, and the total length of the day and the night is fixed; it is 24 hours. The day may become shorter, then the night has to be longer. Or, the day may get longer, then the night will become shorter.

The third part of Verse 36:40 describes a universal law for the celestial bodies; they are all in motion: spinning around their axes and moving in

orbits around certain central bodies. These are perpetual motions till the end of times.

3. Verse 13:2:

الله الذي رفع السماوات بغير عمد ترونها ثم استوى على العرش وسخر الشمس والقمر كل يجري لأجل مسمى يدبر الأمر يفصل الآيات لعلكم بلقاء ربكم توقنون. (الرعد 2).

It is God who has raised the heavens without any supports that you could see, and is established on the throne of His almightiness; and He [it is who] has made the sun and the moon subservient [to His laws], each running its course for a term set [by Him]. He governs all that exists. Clearly does He spell out these messages, so that you might be certain in your innermost that you are destined to meet your Sustainer [on Judgment Day]. (Ar-Ra'd 2-4)

This verse contains several parts. The forth part of the verse again asserts the perpetual motions of the Sun and the Moon. The Moon spins on its axis, completing a rotation once every 27.3 days. It also orbits the Earth once taking the same time. And that explains why one side of the Moon always faces Earth, while the side, called the far side, cannot be seen from Earth.

The Sun spins on its axis, and because of its gaseous form, it takes the Sun 44-30 days to complete one revolution. It is also mentioned before, that the Sun along with the whole Solar system travels through space at roughly 240 km per second, and takes approximately 225-250 million years to complete one revolution around the center of our Milky Way Galaxy.

The verse contains the phrase 'كل يجري لأجل مسمى' which is translated into 'each running its course for a term set [by Him].' This could have two meanings, both of them are correct. It could mean that the cycle of each motion (whether spinning one revolution, or orbiting once) is set and fixed. Or, it could mean that these celestial bodies will continue their motions until the end of times when everything is terminated.

In a previous section, it was shown that the perpetual motions of all inanimate objects are in accordance to the natural laws that are established by God at the time of their creation. The Qur'an tells us that these motions are acts of worshipping God. So, when celestial bodies spin around

themselves or move in orbits, they are extolling God and prostrating to Him.

9.3 Light, Day and Night:

We go back again to Verse 36:37, that reads:

وآية لهم الليل نسلخ منه النهار فإذا هم مظلمون. (يس 37).

And [of Our sway over all that exists] they have a sign in the night: We withdraw from it the [light of] day - and lo! they are in darkness. (Ya-Sin 37).

This verse contains the Arabic verb 'نسلخ', which literally translates into 'to skin' the skin of an animal. In Sec. 9.1, it is analyzed as one among many verses that indicates the sphericity of earth. In Sec. 9.2, it is shown that it alludes to the spinning of the Earth around its own axis. In this section, we look into another miraculous aspect contained in the verse.

This verse tells us that the light around us during daytime is not emitted by earth; it is external to it, and it is in a layer like the skin of an animal. This layer of light is formed when the atmospheric layer around earth scatters and reflects light rays coming from the sun.

Figure (9.2) shows the atmospheric layer forming a skin of light (the blue layer) during daytime. This effect could have never been imagined by a human mind in the 7th century, and was only observed and recorded after space travel in the 20th century. This is another example to how the Qur'an preceded science discovery by more than 1,200 years.

Figure (9.3) shows another photo of the skin of light covering earth during daytime with the photo taken from a farther distance in space. As earth rotates, light rays from the sun is cut off from the eastern part of the atmospheric layer, and that part turns dark. This darkness progresses from east to west as if the light layer is being skinned of the surface of the earth. At the same time, a skin of light is being laid on the western part of earth as these area are being lighted with sun light.



Figure 9.2: The Atmosphere Forms a Skin of Light During Daytime

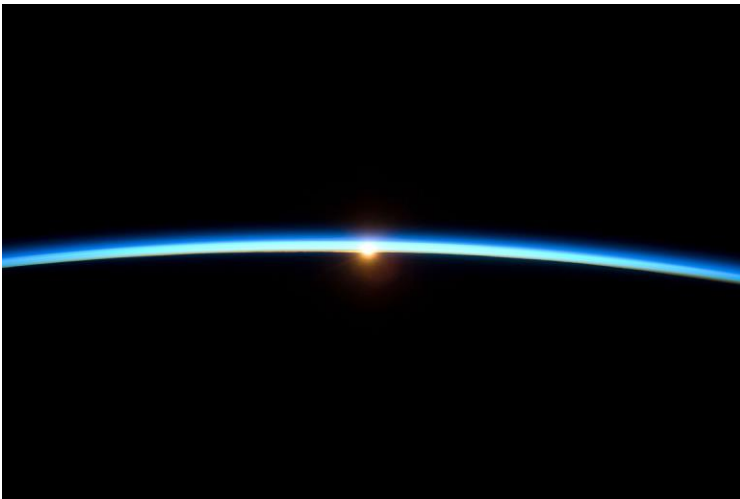


Figure 9.3: The Atmospheric Layer as a Skin of Light

These photos attest to the incredible accuracy of the metaphor in the above verse.

In another verse, Verse 7:54, we read the following:

إن ربكم الله الذي خلق السماوات والأرض في ستة أيام ثم استوى على العرش يغشي الليل النهار يطلبه حثيثاً والشمس والقمر والنجوم مسخرات بأمره ألا له الخلق والأمر تبارك الله رب العالمين. (الأعراف 54).

VERILY, your Sustainer is God, who has created the heavens and the earth in six aeons, and is established on the throne of His almightiness. He covers the day with the night in swift pursuit, with the sun and the moon and the stars subservient to His command: oh, verily, His is all creation and all command. Hallowed is God, the Sustainer of all the worlds! (Al-A'raf 54).

This verse was analyzed in Sec. 8.1 as one of the verses that describe the creation of the Seven Heavens. It is composed of several parts. In this section we focus on the part that reads 'يغشي الليل النهار يطلبه حثيثاً' which is translated into 'He covers the day with the night in swift pursuit.'

This part of the verse tells another scientific fact: the dominance of darkness in the universe. 'Day' in the verse symbolizes 'light', whereas 'night' symbolizes 'darkness.' Thus, the change from day to night is portrayed in this verse as if darkness is dominating light and covering it. Whereas, in a previous verse, the change from night to day, is caused by the unfolding of a thin layer of light over the areas being lighted by sun light.

An astronaut in a spaceship orbiting Earth will see darkness everywhere in space, except when he looks directly to the Sun. This is because light travels in straight lines. Empty space has nothing in it to scatter light and reflect it to the eyes of an onlooker. We can see in Fig. (9.1) and Fig. (9.2) that darkness extends deep in space above the thin layer of light surrounding Earth.

This part of the verse also asserts another fact that was discussed in a previous section that earth is lighted by light from external sources (the sun, the moon, and the stars) If this light is cut off for some reason, darkness prevails. This is affirmed by the following part of the verse which says: 'the Sun and the Moon and the stars subservient to His command.' Thus, God created these celestial bodies to provide light to earth during daytime or during nighttime.

In a third verse, Verse 13:3, we read the following:

وهو الذي مد الأرض وجعل فيها رواسي وأنهاراً ومن كل الثمرات جعل فيها زوجين اثنين يغشي الليل النهار
إن في ذلك لآيات لقوم يتفكرون. (الرعد 3).

*And it is He who has spread the earth wide and placed on it firm
mountains and running waters, and created thereon two sexes of every
[kind of] plant; [and it is He who] causes the night to cover the day.
Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who think!
(Ar-Ra'd 3)*

This verse is similar to Verse 7:54 above. It is composed of several parts. The forth part says 'يغشي الليل النهار' which translates into 'He causes the night to cover the day.' Again, when an area changes from day to night, it is darkness dominating light.

9.4 Mountains Formation and Function:

Verse 88:19, describes the formation of mountains on Earth. It tells us that mountains were raised slowly from the ground up:

والى الجبال كيف نصبت. (الغاشية 19).
And at the mountains, how firmly they are reared? (Al-Ghashiya 19).

The above verse, although short and concise, tells us that the mountains were not created in one 24-hour day, but they rose gradually in a process similar to raising a flag to the top of a flag pole.

Amazingly, this is exactly how mountains were formed according to geology and earth science. There are many types of mountains. The most common type in the world are called fold mountains. The vast mountain ranges stretching on for thousands of kilometers, such as the Himalayan Mountains in Asia, and the Rocky Mountains in North America, are fold mountains. Fold mountains are formed when two of the Earth's tectonic plates collide head on; the edges of each tectonic plate crumple and buckle, and start rising above the ground. This process continues slowly over millions of years and thus creating the mountains.

Figure (9.4) shows how the Himalayan mountains were created as a result to the collision of the Indian plate with the Eurasian plate. Initially, "India" landmass was isolated from Asia, but was moving slowly towards it.

About 10 million years ago it collided with the Eurasian plate, and the Himalayan mountains start rising and forming.¹¹⁶

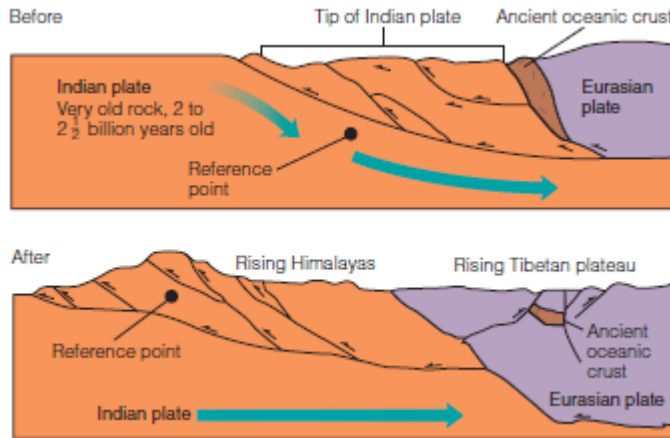


Figure 9.4: Creation of Fold Mountains.

Another type of mountains is the Fault-block mountains. These are created when faults or cracks in the Earth's crust force materials upward. Here, again, the mountains rise slowly above the ground over millions of years.

Scientists discovered that mountains have 'roots' beneath them. They discovered that the surface layers of the Earth yield under the weight of large masses. This behavior is called 'Isostasy', which caused the formation of roots under the mountains.

Suppose one carried a gravimeter along in a balloon at constant height (Fig. 9.2). Over mountains one would expect the gravity to be larger due to the mass of the mountains below, but the increase is often much less than the value calculated using the observed size and density of the mountains. The discrepancy between calculated and actual values is proportionately

¹¹⁶ Monroe, J.S. & R. Wicander (2006) - *The Changing Earth: Exploring Geology and Evolution*, 4e, Thomson, p. 283.

greatest for the largest mountains, such as the Andes and Himalayas, where the increase may be as little as a third of the calculated value.¹¹⁷

Somehow, the mountains have less mass than appears, but huge caverns or low-density rocks concealed inside the mountains are implausible. Instead, the calculated value is wrong because it assumes that a mountain simply exists on top of the Earth's surface, with the rocks below as shown in A in Fig. (9.5). In reality, large mountains such as C have deep roots beneath them that are made of lower-density rocks. As a result, the increase in the gravity due to the visible mountain is partly cancelled by the lower-density 'roots' beneath them.

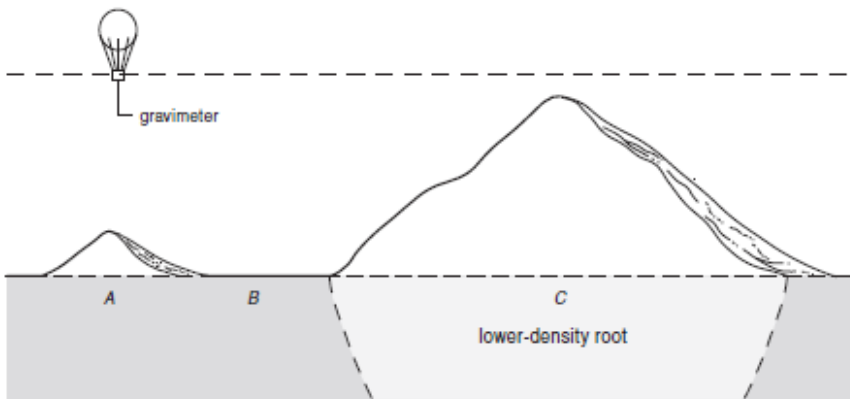


Figure 9.5: Gravity Over Small and Large Mountains.

It is further found that all Earth's mountain systems have roots beneath them.. On this, Monroe & Wicander write the following:

"In most places continental crust is about 35 km thick, but it is much thicker beneath the Rocky Mountains, the Appalachians, the Alps in Europe, and the Himalayas of Asia. (Oceanic crust is only 5 to 10 km thick.) As a matter of fact, continental crust is thicker beneath all of Earth's mountain systems. And it is this

¹¹⁷ Mussett, A.E. & M.A. Khan (2000) - *Looking into the Earth. An Introduction to Geological Geophysics*, Cambridge Univ. Press, pp 125-126.

difference in thickness coupled with the fact that continental crust is less dense than oceanic crust that explains why mountains stand high.”¹¹⁸

In general, the root of the mountain is about 5.6 times deeper than the height of the mountain. The fact that mountains have roots beneath them was discovered in the middle 19th century. Amazingly, the Qur'an, which was revealed in the early 7th century, mentions this fact. Verses 78:6-7 indicate that the rising mountains have roots that go deep into Earth crust:

ألم نجعل الأرض مهاداً والجبال أوتاداً. (النبا 6-7).

HAVE WE NOT made the earth a resting-place [for you], and the mountains [its] pegs? (An-Naba' 6-7).

Notice that the above verse used the word 'الجبال' which means 'mountains', and it used the word 'أوتاداً' which means 'stakes' or 'pegs' (like those used to anchor a tent). Thus, the information contained in the Glorious Qur'an about the nature of mountains, is in perfect agreement with recent discoveries in geology and earth science.

Another verse, Verse 79:32 describes the mountains as firm in their places. They don't slide because they have roots in the crust:

والجبال أرساها. (النازعات 32).

and has made the mountains firm: (An-Nazi'at 32).

Whereas the above verses use the word 'الجبال' (mountains above the ground), in the Qur'an we find nine verses that use the word 'رواسي' *rawasi* to describe an Earth's structure that stabilizes the motion and shaking of the crust. These are Verses 13:3, 15:19, 16:15, 21:31, 27:61, 31:10, 41:10, 50:7, and 77:27. Most of the translators of the Qur'an translate 'رواسي' into 'mountains'. Ahmad Ali, however, translates it into 'stabilizer', and this translation is used in the following translations:¹¹⁹

Verse 13:3,

¹¹⁸ Monroe, J.S. & R. Wicander (2006) - *The Changing Earth: Exploring Geology and Evolution*, 4e, Thomson, p. 284.

¹¹⁹ Ali, Ahmed (1988) - *Al-Qur'an. A Contemporary Translation*.

وهو الذي مد الأرض وجعل فيها رواسي وأنهارا ... (الرعد 3).

It is He who stretched the earth and placed upon it stabilizers and rivers; ... (Ar-Ra'd 3).

Verse 15:19,

والأرض مددناها وألقينا فيها رواسي وأنبتنا فيها من كل شيء موزون (الحجر 19).

We stretched the earth and placed upon it firm stabilizers, and made all things grow upon it balanced evenly. (Al-Hijr 19).

Verse 16:15,

وألقي في الأرض رواسي أن تميد بكم وأنهارا وسبلا لعلكم تهتدون. (النحل 15).

He placed stabilizers in the earth so that while it revolves you live undisturbed, and rivers and tracks so that you may find your way; (An-Nahl 15)

Verse 21:31,

وجعلنا في الأرض رواسي أن تميد بهم وجعلنا فيها سبلا لعلهم يهتدون. (الأنبياء 31).

We placed stabilizers in the earth so that as it revolved with them you lived undisturbed; and We provided passageways between them so that men may find their way; (Al-Anbiya 31).

Verse 27:61,

أمن جعل الأرض قرارا وجعل خلالها أنهارا وجعل لها رواسي وجعل بين البحرين حاجزا أإله مع الله بل أكثرهم لا يعلمون. (النمل 61).

Who then made the earth a habitable place, and made the rivers (flow) in its valleys and dales, and placed upon it firm stabilizers, and kept a barrier between two bodies of water? Is there any other god along with God? In reality most of them do not know. (An-Naml 61).

Verse 31:10.

خلق السماوات بغير عمد ترونها وألقى في الأرض رواسي أن تميد بكم... (لقمان 10).

He created the skies without a support, as you can see, and placed stabilizers in the earth that you may dwell at ease as it revolves; ... (Luqman 10).

Verse 41:10,

وجعل فيها رواسي من فوقها ... (فصلت 10).

He placed firm stabilizers rising above its surface, ... (Fussilat 10).

Verse 50:7,

والأرض مددناها وألقينا فيها رواسي ... (ق 7).

We stretched the earth and placed upon it firm stabilizers ... (Qaf 7).

And Verse 77:27.

وجعلنا فيها رواسي شامخات وأسقيناكم ماء فراتا. (المرسلات 27).

And placed in it lofty and broad stabilizers, and gave you sweet water to drink? (Al-Mursalat 27).

In conjunction with the earth structure, *rawasi*, the above verses used two verbs, 'ألقى' which means 'placed', and 'جعل' which means 'made.' So, these verses tell us that these *rawasi* were made and placed on earth to stabilize it and limit the movement and shaking of its crust.

The Earth feature, *rawasi*, that helps stabilize the crust and limits its shaking, could be the mountains that rise above the ground after all. A recent study showed that the 7.8 magnitude Gorkha earthquake that hit Nepal in 2015 resulted in only 1,700 deaths and 11,000 people injured in the Kathmandu Valley, whereas a comparable seismic event was expected to result in 100,000 fatalities and 200,000 injured. The analysis showed that, during this earthquake, surface topography restricted the propagation of seismic energy into the valley. The mountains diverted the incoming seismic wave mostly to the eastern and western margins of the valley. This resulted in de-amplification of peak ground displacement in most of the valley interior. This indicates that surface topography contributed to the reduced seismic shaking for this specific earthquake and lessened the earthquake impact within the valley.¹²⁰

Alternatively, the *rawasi* could be the seamounts, the underwater mountains that rise from seafloor. These seamounts are remnants of extinct volcanoes and may rise more than 1000 meter above the surrounding seafloor. A study showed that the subduction of seamounts provides a

¹²⁰ Meijde, M. et al (2020) - "The Influence of Surface Topography on the Weak Ground Shaking in Kathmandu Valley during the 2015 Gorkha Earthquake, Nepal", Sensors, 20(3), 678.

favorable condition for aseismic creep and small earthquakes but an unfavorable condition for the generation and propagation of large earthquakes.¹²¹

9.5 Water, the Source of Life:

There are three verses that tell us that Water is the origin of all life forms. These are Verses 21:30, 24:45, and 25:54.

Verse 21:30,

أولم ير الذين كفروا أن السماوات والأرض كانتا رتقا ففتقناهما وجعلنا من الماء كل شيء حي أفلا يؤمنون (الأنبياء 30).

ARE, THEN, they who are bent on denying the truth not aware that the heavens and the earth were [once] one single entity, which We then parted asunder? – and [that] We made out of water every living thing? Will they not, then, [begin to] believe? (Al-Anbiya 30).

The above verse is composed of two main parts. The second part clearly declares that every living thing is made out of water. These include humans, animals and plants.

Verse 24:45,

والله خلق كل دابة من ماء فمنهم من يمشي على بطنه ومنهم من يمشي على رجلين ومنهم من يمشي على أربع يخلق الله ما يشاء إن الله على كل شيء قدير. (النور 45).

And it is God who has created all animals out of water; and [He has willed that] among them are such as crawl on their bellies, and such as walk on two legs, and such as walk on four. God creates what He will: for, verily, God has the power to will anything. (An-Nur 45).

The above verse asserts that every moving creature (including humans) are created out of water.

And Verse 25:54.

وهو الذي خلق من الماء بشرا فجعله نسبا وصهرا وكان ربك قديرا. (الفرقان 54).

¹²¹ Wang & Bilek (2013) - "Do subducting seamounts generate or stop large earthquakes?", *Geology*, Vol. 39, Sept 2011, pp 819-822.

And He it is who out of this [very] water has created man, and has endowed him with [the con-sciousness of] descent and marriage-tie: for thy Sustainer is ever infinite in His power. (Al-Furqan 54).

The above verse specifically tells us that humans are created out of water. Water in this verse could have different meanings. It could mean normal drinking water. Alternatively, it could mean man's semen. The context of the verse is to assert that the origin of a human being is a drop of negligible water or semen. It also emphasizes the importance of being born out of a legal marriage between the father and mother to establish the network of his relatives from both the father and mother sides. A person who is born as a result of an out of wedlock sexual relationship would not have this important family network.

It is now agreed as a scientific fact that the presence of water is a necessary condition for life. On this, Christophe Lecuyer, a professor of the history of science and technology at the Université Pierre et Marie Curie, writes the following:

*"Water is necessary for life as it carries dissolved oxygen and nutrients to the cells, ensures aerobic respiration and enzymatic activity, removes wastes and greatly assists the body temperature regulation of vertebrates. Living cell consist of approximately 70 wt% of water; the muscles contain approximately 80 wt% while the skeleton contains between 25 and 40 wt% of water. The peculiar physicochemical properties of water play a key role in several biochemical reactions that take place within living beings. For example, the high surface tension of water ensures its capillary transport through blood vessels. The high heat capacity of water makes possible the regulation of the body temperature range (-10°C to +30°C) on the Earth's surface or that suffer high daily temperature fluctuations. The polar structure of water is responsible for the dissolution of most salts and the transportation of ions through cell membranes such as K^+ , Na^+ , Mg^{2+} , Ca^{2+} or Cl^- , SO_4^{2-} , NO_3^- , HCO_3^- without altering the non-polar organic molecules that build the membranes protecting the cell content from external medium."*¹²²

¹²² Lecuyer, C. (2014) - *Water on Earth. Physicochemical and Biological Properties*, Wiley, p 155.

The Qur'an contains many more verses that amplify the importance of water in all aspects of life. Here are some of these verses.

Verse 30:24,

ومن آياته يريكم البرق خوفاً وطمعاً وينزل من السماء ماءً فيحيي به الأرض بعد موتها إن في ذلك لآيات لقوم يعقلون. (الروم 24).

And among His wonders is this: He displays before you the lightning, giving rise to [both] fear and hope, and sends down water from the skies, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who use their reason! (Ar-Rum 24).

Verse 36:34,

وجعلنا فيها جنات من نخيل وأعناب وفجرنا فيها من العيون. (يس 34).

and [how] We make gardens of date-palms and vines [grow] thereon, and cause springs to gush [forth] within it, (Ya-Sin 34).

Verse 45:5,

واختلاف الليل والنهار وما أنزل الله من السماء من رزق فأحيا به الأرض بعد موتها وتصريف الرياح آيات لقوم يعقلون. (الجاثية 5).

And in the succession of night and day, and in the means of subsistence which God sends down from the skies, giving life thereby to the earth after it had been lifeless, and in the change of the winds: [in all this] there are messages for people who use their reason. (Al-Jathiya 5).

And Verse 50:9.

ونزلنا من السماء ماءً مباركاً فأنبتنا به جنات وحب الحصيد. (ق 9).

And We send down from the skies water rich in blessings, and cause thereby gardens to grow, and fields of grain, (Qaf 9).

9.6 The Water Cycle:

Most of the ancient thinkers and scholars were aware of the origin of rain and that it is a result of the evaporation of water from seas and oceans. However, they maintained the belief that water rising up through the earth contributed a great deal to rivers. Also, they did not know the source of underground water. They thought the water of the oceans, under the effect of winds, was thrust towards the interior of the continents.

It was Bernard Palissy who is generally credited with the discovery of the hydrologic cycle in 1580 CE. He was the first thinker to assert that rainfall alone was sufficient for the maintenance of rivers.¹²³

Felix Franks, in his book 'Water. A Matrix of Life', describes the modern hydrologic cycle in the following:

"Although the hydrologic cycle, shown in Fig (9.6), is a continuum, its description usually begins with the oceans which cover 71% of the earth's surface. The heat of the sun causes water to evaporate. Under the influence of certain changes in temperature and/or pressure, the moisture condenses and returns to earth in the form of rain, hail, sleet or snow - collectively referred to as water of meteoric origin. It falls irregularly with respect to geographical location, with coastal areas receiving more.

*Of the average rainfall, about 70% evaporates, the remainder appears as liquid water on or below the land surface. Some water evaporates in the air between the clouds and the land surface. The remaining losses are of two forms: direct evaporation from wet surfaces and transpiration through plants from their leaves and stems. The 30% of water not directly returned to the atmosphere constitutes the runoff and provide our potentially available freshwater supply. Actually, the proportion of the earth's total freshwater resource which participates in the hydrologic cycle does not exceed 0.003%; the remainder is locked up in the Antarctic ice cap. If melted, it could supply all of the earth's rivers for 850 years."*¹²⁴

There are several verses in the Qur'an that accurately describe the different phases in the hydrologic cycle:

Verse 7:57,

وهو الذي يرسل الرياح بشرا بين يدي رحمته حتى إذا أقلت سحابا ثقالا سقناه لبلد ميت فأنزلنا به الماء فأخرجنا به من كل الثمرات كذلك نخرج الموتى لعلكم تذكرون. (الأعراف 57).

And He it is who sends forth the winds as a glad tidings of His coming grace-so that, when they have brought heavy clouds, We may drive them towards dead land and cause thereby water to descend; and by this means do We cause all manner of fruit to come forth. Even thus shall

¹²³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_cycle

¹²⁴ Franks, F. (2000) - Water: A Matrix of Life, RSC, 2e, p 2.

*We cause the \dead to come forth: [and this] you ought to keep in mind.
(Al-A'raf 57).*

The above verse describes the phase in which evaporated water forms the clouds; then, the winds push the clouds over land.

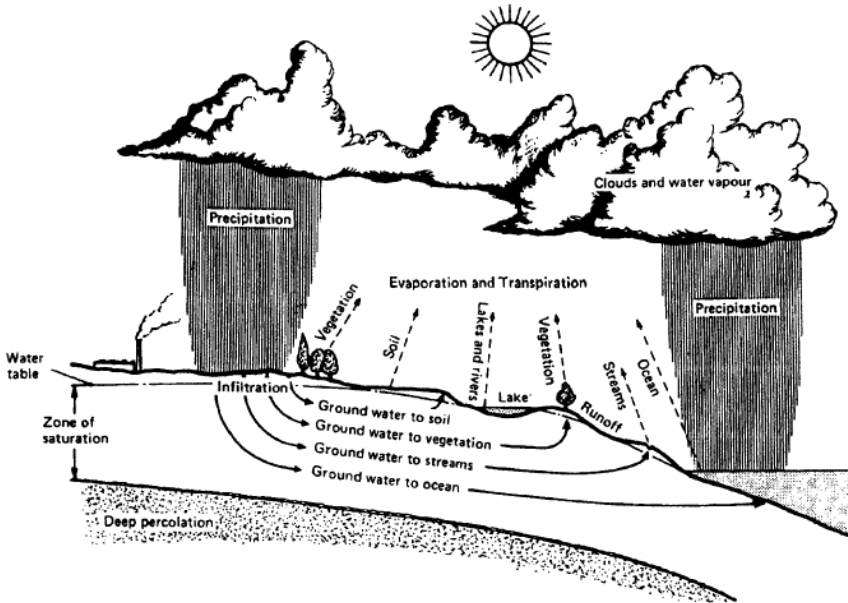


Figure 9.6: Schematic Representation of the Hydrologic Cycle.

Verse 15:22,

وأرسلنا الرياح لواقح فأنزلنا من السماء ماء فأسقيناكموه وما أنتم له بخازنين. (الحجر 22).
And We send the winds fertilizing (to fill heavily the clouds with water), then caused the water (rain) to descend from the sky, and We gave it to you to drink, and it is not you who are the owners of its stores [i.e. to give water to whom you like or to withhold it from whom you like]. (Al-Hijr 22).¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.

The above verse describes how the winds impregnate the clouds. The Arabic word used here is 'لواقح' *lawaaqih* which is the plural of *laqih* from *laqaha*, which means to impregnate or fecundate. In this context, impregnate means that the wind pushes the clouds together increasing the condensation that causes lightning and thus rain.¹²⁶

Verse 23:18,

وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً بِقَدَرٍ فَأَسْكَنَاهُ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنَّا عَلَى ذَهَابٍ بِهِ لِقَادِرُونَ. (المؤمنون 18).
And We send down water from the skies in accordance with a measure [set by Us], and then We cause it to lodge in the earth: but, behold, We are most certainly able to withdraw this [blessing]! (Al-Mu'minun 18).

The above verse describes the preservation of fresh water in underground reservoirs (aquifers.) Man can access this water by digging a well.

Verse 24:43,

أَلَمْ تَرَ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَزْجِي سَحَابًا ثُمَّ يُؤَلِّفُ بَيْنَهُ ثُمَّ يَجْعَلُهُ رُكَّامًا فَتَرَى الْوَدْقَ يَخْرُجُ مِنْ خِلَالِهِ وَيَنْزِلُ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مِنْ جِبَالٍ فِيهَا مِنْ بَرَدٍ فَيُصِيبُ بِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَصْرِفُهُ عَنِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ يَكَادُ سَنَا بَرْقُهُ يَذْهَبُ بِالْأَبْصَارِ. (النور 43).
Art thou not aware that it is God who causes the clouds to move onward, then joins them together, then piles them up in masses, until thou can see rain come forth from their midst? And He it is who sends down from the skies, by degrees, mountainous masses [of clouds] charged with hail, striking therewith whomever He wills and averting it from whomever He wills, [the while] the flash of His lightning well-nigh deprives [men of their] sight! (An-Nur 43)

The above verse describes the formation of the clouds that can produce rain. The clouds are formed in pieces that join each other to form larger clouds. Eventually, rain-producing clouds are formed. These clouds also send hail, snow and sleet.

Verses 25:48-49,

وَهُوَ الَّذِي أَرْسَلَ الرِّيَّاحَ بُشْرًا بَيْنَ يَدَيْ رَحْمَتِهِ وَأَنْزَلْنَا مِنَ السَّمَاءِ مَاءً طَهُورًا (48) لِنَحْيِيَ بِهِ بَلْدَةً مَيِّتًا وَنَسْقِيَهُ مِمَّا خَلَقْنَا أَنْعَامًا وَأَنْعَاسِي كَثِيرًا. (49) (الفرقان 48-49).

¹²⁶ Naik, Z. - *The Qur'an and Modern Science - Compatible or Incompatible*, p 22.

48. *And He it is who sends forth the winds as a glad tiding of His coming grace; and [thus, too,] We cause pure water to descend from the skies,*

49. *so that We may bring dead land to life thereby, and give to drink thereof to many [beings] of Our creation, beasts as well as humans. (Al-Furqan 48-49).*

Verse 30:48,

والله الذي يرسل الرياح فتثير سحابا فيبسطه في السماء كيف يشاء ويجعله كسفا فترى الودق يخرج من خلاله فإذا أصاب به من يشاء من عباده إذا هم يستبشرون. (الروم 48).

It is God who sends forth the winds [of hope], so that they raise a cloud - whereupon He spreads it over the skies as He wills, and causes it to break up so that thou seest rain issue from within it: and as soon as He causes it to fall upon whomever He wills of His servants - lo! they rejoice, (Ar-Rum 48).

Verse 35:9,

والله الذي أرسل الرياح فتثير سحابا فسقناه إلى بلد ميت فأحيينا به الأرض بعد موتها كذلك النشور. (فاطر 9).

AND [remember:] it is God who sends forth the winds, so that they raise a cloud, whereupon We drive it towards dead land and thereby give life to the earth after it had been lifeless: even thus shall resur-rection be! (Fatir 9).

Verse 39:21,

ألم تر أن الله أنزل من السماء ماء فسلكه ينابيع في الأرض ثم يخرج به زرعا مختلفا ألوانه ثم يهيح فتراه مصفرا ثم يجعله حطاما إن في ذلك لذكرى لأولي الألباب. (الزمر 21).

ART THOU NOT aware that it is God who sends down water from the skies, and then causes it to travel through the earth in the shape of springs? And then He brings forth thereby herbage of various hues; and then it withers, and thou canst see it turn yellow; and in the end He causes it to crumble to dust. Verily, in [all] this there is indeed a reminder to those who are endowed with insight! (Az-Zumar 21)

The above verse asserts that rain is the origin of all running freshwater from springs or rivers. This is the fact discovered by Bernard Palissy in 1580 CE. No other text dating back 1400 years ago gives such an accurate description of the water cycle.

And Verses 56:68-70.

أفرايتم الماء الذي تشربون (68) أنتم أنزلتموه من المزن أم نحن المنزلون (69) لو نشاء جعلناء أجاجا فلو لا تشكرون (70). (الواقعة 68-70).

68. *Have you ever considered the water which you drink?*

69. *Is it you who cause it to come down from the clouds - or are We the cause of its coming down?*

70. *[It comes down sweet - but] were it Our will, We could make it burningly salty and bitter: why, then, do you not give thanks [unto Us]? (Al-Waqi'a 68-70).*

In the above verse, the word 'أجاجا' means 'burning salty and bitter' water. This alludes to the harmful and poisonous Acid Rain. Rain is a blessing and a source of fresh water. But if the cloud carrying rain is subjected to Sulfuric gases emitted from volcanoes or factories, rain could change into Acid Rain, and, thus, becomes poisonous and undrinkable.¹²⁷

9.7 Everything Is Made of Pairs:

Everything in this world exists in pairs. We can see around us males and females in humans and in animals, north-pole magnets and south-pole magnets, day and night, and electricity and magnetism. But then duality is exhibited even in the subatomic world that is unobservable with the naked eye.

It was Paul Dirac who was the first to predict the existence of antimatter in papers published from 1928 onwards. He predicted the existence of the positron, a new particle with the same mass of the electron but with a charge that was positive rather than negative. In 1933, Dirac went on and predicted the existence of the antiproton, the counterpart to the proton. All of these antimatter particles were later proven to exist experimentally.

¹²⁷ Rothschild, R.E. (2019) - *Poisonous Skies. Acid Rain and the Globalization of Pollution*, Univ. Chicago Press.

Amazingly, there are several verses in the Qur'an that predicted the Duality in Creation more than 1,200 before Dirac did. They are Verses 13:3, 20:53, 36:36, 43:12, 51:49, and 78:8.

Verse 51:49,

ومن كل شيء خلقنا زوجين لعلكم تتذكرون. (الذاريات 49)

And in everything have We created opposites (pairs), so that you might bear in mind [that God alone is One]. (Adh-Dhariyat 49)

The above verse states that everything, organic or inorganic, is created in opposite pairs.

Verse 43:12,

والذي خلق الأزواج كلها وجعل لكم من الفلك والأنعام ما تركبون. (الزخرف 12).

And He it is who has created all opposites. And He [it is who] has provided for you all those ships and animals whereon you ride, (Az-Zukhruf 12).

Again, the first part of the above verse states that everything is created in pairs.

Verse 78:8,

وخلقناكم أزواجا. (النبا 8).

And We have created you in pairs; (An-Naba' 8).

The above verse emphasize that humans are created in pairs.

Verse 36:36,

سبحان الذي خلق الأزواج كلها مما تنبت الأرض ومن أنفسهم ومما لا يعلمون. (يس 36)

Limitless in His glory is He who has created opposites in whatever the earth produces, and in men's own selves, and in that of which [as yet] they have no knowledge. (Ya-Sin 36)

The above verse says that everything is created in pairs, including plants and things that the humans do not know at present and may discover later. This alludes to the world of sub particles, or to the world of unseen spirits.

Verse 13:3,

وهو الذي مد الأرض وجعل فيها رواسي وأنهارا ومن كل الثمرات جعل فيها زوجين اثنين يغشي الليل النهار إن في ذلك لآيات لقوم يتفكرون. (الرعد 3).

And it is He who has spread the earth wide and placed on it firm mountains and running waters, and created thereon two sexes of every [kind of] plant; [and it is He who] causes the night to cover the day. Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who think! (Ar-Ra'd 3).

And Verse 20:53.

الذي جعل لكم الأرض مهدا وسلك لكم فيها سبلا وأنزل من السماء ماء فأخرجنا به أزواجا من نبات شتى. (طه 53).

"He Who has, made for you the earth like a carpet spread out; has enabled you to go about therein by roads (and channels); and has sent down water from the sky." With it have We produced diverse pairs of plants each separate from the others." (Ta-Ha 53).¹²⁸

The above two verses inform us about the existence of male and female organs in the plants. And similar to what happens in the human and animal worlds, the male organ in plants must fertilize the female organ in order for the plant to reproduce.

The discovery of sex in plants is usually credited to Camerarius who in 1698 CE published his sexual theory in plants in his landmark *De Sexu Plantarum Epistola*. The theory is summarized in the following:

"In the vegetable kingdom, no production of seeds, the most perfect gift of nature, the general means for the maintenance of the species, takes place, unless the anthers have prepared beforehand the young plant contained in the seed. It appears, therefore, justifiable to give these anthers a nobler name and to ascribe to them the significance of male sexual organs, since they are the receptacles in which the "seed" itself, that is that "dust" which is the most subtle part of the plant, is secreted and collected, and from which it is later distributed. ... It is equally evident that the ovary with its style represents the female sexual organ of the plant, which must provide, with all its strength, a mother's support for her new-born fetus, which she conceives and for which she cares.

¹²⁸ Ali, Yusuf (1934) - *The Qur'an Translation*.

They behave indeed to each other as male and female, and are otherwise not different from one another. They are thus distinguished with respect to sex, and this is not to be understood as it is ordinarily done, as a sort of comparison, analogy, or figure of speech, but is to be taken actually and literally as such.”¹²⁹

Thus, regarding reproduction in plants, the Qur'an preceded scientific discovery by more than 950 years.

9.8 Fine Tuning in the Universe:

Scientists are puzzled that there are indications that our universe is fine tuned to allow the existence of intelligent life. All the laws of nature have particular constants associated with them: the gravitational constant, the speed of light, the electric charge, the mass of the electron, and Planck's constant from quantum mechanics. All the above constants are critical to the formation of the basic building blocks of life. And, the range of possible values for these constants is very narrow, only about 1 to 5% for the combination of constants. Outside this range, and life (in particular, intelligent life) would be impossible.

For example, the gravitational constant determines strength of gravity. If this constant is lower, then stars would have insufficient pressure to overcome Coulomb barrier to start thermonuclear fusion (i.e. stars would not shine). If higher, stars burn too fast, use up fuel before life has a chance to evolve.

Next, the strong force coupling constant holds particles together in the nucleus of atom. If it is weaker, than multi-proton particles would not hold together, hydrogen would be the only element in the Universe. If stronger, all elements lighter than iron would be rare. Also radioactive decay would be less, which heats core of Earth.

Third, the electromagnetic coupling constant determines strength of electromagnetic force that couples electrons to nucleus. If it is less, then no

¹²⁹ Quoted in: Taiz, L. & L. Taiz (2017) - *Flora Unveiled. The Discovery and Denial of Sex in Plants*, Oxford Univ. Press, p 344.

electrons will be held in orbit. If stronger, electrons will not bond with other atoms. Either way, no molecules.

Reflecting on the above fact, geneticist Francis Collins, in his book *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, wrote the following:

*"... The precise tuning of all the physical constants and physical laws to make intelligent life possible is not an accident, but reflects the action of the one who created the universe in the first place."*¹³⁰

In the '*Grand Design*', Stephen Hawking and Leonard Mlodinow wrote the following:

"... Most of the fundamental constants in our theories appear fine-tuned in the sense that if they were altered by only modest amounts, the universe would be qualitatively different, and in many cases unsuitable for the development of life...

*... The emergence of the complex structures capable of supporting intelligent observers seems to be very fragile. The laws of nature form a system that is extremely fine-tuned, and very little in physical law can be altered without destroying the possibility of the development of life as we know it. Were it not for a series of startling coincidences in the precise details of physical law, it seems, humans and similar life-forms would never have come into being."*¹³¹

Physician Michael Anthony Corey writes:

*"The stupendous degree of fine-tuning that instantly existed between these fundamental parameters following the Big Bang reveals a miraculous level of micro-engineering that is simply inconceivable in the absence of a "supercalculating" Designer."*¹³²

Astronomer George Greenstein asserts:

"As we survey the evidence, the thought insistently arises that some supernatural agency—or rather Agency—must be involved. Is it

¹³⁰ Collins, F. (2006) - *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief*, Free Press, p. 75.

¹³¹ Hawking, S. & L. Mlodinow (2010) - *The Grand Design*, Bantam Books, pp 89-91.

¹³² Corey, M.A. (1993) - *God and the New Cosmology: The Anthropic Design Argument*, Rowman & Littlefield, pp. 44-45.

possible that suddenly, without intending to, we have stumbled upon scientific proof of the existence of a Supreme Being? Was it God who stepped in and so providentially crafted the cosmos for our benefit?"¹³³

And theoretical physicist Tony Rothman adds,

"The medieval theologian who gazed at the night sky through the eyes of Aristotle and saw angels moving the spheres in harmony has become the modern cosmologist who gazes at the same sky through the eyes of Einstein and sees the hand of God not in angels but in the constants of nature.... When confronted with the order and beauty of the universe and the strange coincidences of nature, it's very tempting to take the leap of faith from science to religion. I am sure many physicists want to. I only wish they would admit it."¹³⁴

Amazingly, in the Qur'an we find several verses asserting that indeed the universe was created in a precise manner that makes it perfect for human life. We read this assertion in Verses 13:8, 15:19, 15:21, and 54:49.

Verse 54:49,

إنا كل شيء خلقناه بقدر. (القمر 49).

BEHOLD, everything have We created in due measure and proportion; (Al-Qamar 49).

The above verse clearly asserts that everything is created in a precise and exact measure and proportion. Thus, indeed, if the physical constants discussed above were higher or lower than their current values by a small percentage, life would not exist.

Verse 15:21,

وإن من شيء إلا عندنا خزائنه وما ننزله إلا بقدر معلوم. (الحجر 21).

¹³³ Greenstein, G. (1988) - *The Symbiotic Universe: Life and Mind in the Cosmos*, New York: Morrow, p. 27.

¹³⁴ Rothman, T. (1987) - "A 'What You See Is What You Beget' Theory," *Discover*, May 1987, p. 99.

For, no single thing exists that does not have its source with Us; and nought do We bestow from on high unless it be in accordance with a measure well-defined. (Al-Hijr 21).

The above verse asserts that the components of the ecosystems are in a precise manner to allow human life to flourish. Thus, we have the right amounts of oxygen and nitrogen in the air, the right properties of water that make it support life, .. and so on.

Verse 15:19,

والأرض مددناها وألقينا فيها رواسي وأنبتنا فيها من كل شيء موزون. (الحجر 19).
And the earth -We have spread it out wide, and placed on it mountains firm, and caused [life] of every kind to grow on it in a balanced manner, (Al-Hijr 19)

The last part in the above verse asserts the proper balance in the ecosystems that allows the continuity of life on earth.

10- Creation of Humans

10.1 Purpose of Creation of Humans:

Man faces many basic questions about life. Perhaps, the most important ones are: Why am I here? What is the purpose of my existence?

In the Qur'an we find several verses that give clear answers to these questions. Several direct answers are found in Verses 51:56 and 36:60-61.

Verse 51:56,

وما خلقت الجن والإنس إلا ليعبدون. (الذاريات 56).

And I (Allah) created not the jinns and humans except they should worship Me (Alone). (Adh-Dhariyat 56).¹³⁵

And Verses 36:60-61.

ألم أعهد إليكم يا بني آدم أن لا تعبدوا الشيطان إنه لكم عدو مبين (60) وأن اعبدوني هذا صراط مستقيم (61). (يس 60-61).

60. Did I not enjoin on you, O you children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan – since, verily, he is your open foe,

61. and that you should worship Me [alone]? This would have been a straight way! (Ya-Sin 60-61),

So, this is the purpose of our existence. **It is to acknowledge and believe in the existence of God, the Creator, worship Him alone according to the way He instructs us to do, and not to follow Satan.** This is the basic message of all the prophets whom God sent to people. We find this message declared in many verses:

In Verse 7:59, it is the message of Noah:

لقد أرسلنا نوحا إلى قومه فقال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره إني أخاف عليكم عذاب يوم عظيم. (الأعراف 59).

INDEED, We sent forth Noah unto his people, and he said: "O my people! Worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him.

¹³⁵ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.

Verily, I fear lest suffering befall you on an awesome Day!" (Al-A'raf 59).

This message of Noah is affirmed in Verses 11:25-26, 23:23 and 71:3.

In Verse 7:65, it is the message of Hud:

وإلى عاد أخاهم هودا قال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره أفلا تتقون. (الأعراف 65).
 AND UNTO [the tribe of] Ad [We sent] their brother Hud. He said:
 "O my people! **Worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him.** Will you not, then, be conscious of Him?" (Al-A'raf 59).

Hud's message is affirmed in Verses 11:50 and 46:21.

In Verse 7:73, it is the message of Salih:

وإلى ثمود أخاهم صالحا قال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره.. (الأعراف 73).
 AND UNTO [the tribe of] Thamud [We sent] their brother Salih He said: "O my people! **Worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him...** (Al-A'raf 73).

Salih's message is affirmed in Verses 11:61 and 27:45.

In Verse 7:85, it is the message of Shu'ayb:

وإلى مدين أخاهم شعيبا قال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره... (الأعراف 85).
 AND UNTO [the people of] Madyan [We sent] their brother Shu'ayb. He said: "O my people! **Worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him...** (Al-A'raf 85).

Shu'ayb's message is affirmed in Verse 29:36.

In Verse 29:16, it is the message of Abraham:

وإبراهيم إذ قال لقومه اعبدوا الله واتقوه ذلكم خير لكم إن كنتم تعلمون. (العنكبوت 16).
 And Abraham, [too, was inspired by Us] when he said unto his people: **"Worship God, and be conscious of Him: this is the best for you, if you but knew it!"** (Al-Ankabut 16).

In Verse 12:40, it is the message of Joseph:

... إن الحكم إلا لله أمر ألا تعبدوا إلا إياه ذلك الدين القيم ولكن أكثر الناس لا يعلمون. (يوسف 40)

... . Judgment [as to what is right and what is wrong] rests with God alone-[and] He has ordained that **you should worship nought but Him**: this is the [one] ever-true faith; but most people know it not. (Yusuf 40).

In Verse 5:72, it is the message of Jesus:

لقد كفر الذين قالوا إن الله هو المسيح ابن مريم وقال المسيح يا بني إسرائيل اعبدوا الله ربي وربكم إنه من يشرك بالله فقد حرم الله عليه الجنة ومأواه النار وما للظالمين من أنصار. (المائدة 72).

Indeed, the truth deny they who say, "Behold, God is the Christ, son of Mary" - seeing that the Christ [himself] said, "O children of Israel!

Worship God [alone], who is my Sustainer as well as your Sustainer." Behold, whoever ascribes divinity to any being beside God, unto him will God deny paradise, and his goal shall be the fire: and such evildoers will have none to succour them! (Al-Ma'ida 72).

Jesus' message is affirmed in Verse 5:117.

And, Verse 16:36 tells us that the call to '**worship God alone**' is the message of every prophet sent by God:

ولقد بعثنا في كل أمة رسولا أن اعبدوا الله واجتنبوا الطاغوت ... (النحل 36).

And indeed, within every community have We raised up an apostle [entrusted with this message]: "**Worship God, and shun the powers of evil!**" ... (An-Nahl 36).

Several prophet were mentioned by name in the Qur'an. However, there were hundreds of prophets who were not mentioned. Nonetheless, the above verse tells us that all of them had the same message: '**Worship God alone**'.

Abraham was considered the 'Father of the Prophets' because many of his descendants were prophets. The Qur'an often mentions 'ملة إبراهيم' which is translated into 'The Creed of Abraham.' The core of this creed is to worship God alone, or 'monotheism.' The reference to 'The Creed of Abraham' is found in Verses 2:130, 2:135, 3:95, 5:125, 6:161, 12:38, 16:123, and 22:78. Here are examples of these verses.

Verse 3:95,

قل صدق الله فاتبعوا ملة إبراهيم حنيفا وما كان من المشركين. (آل عمران 95).

Say (O Muhammad): "Allah has spoken the truth; follow the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham) Hanifa (Islamic Monotheism, i.e. he used to worship Allah Alone), and he was not of Al-Mushrikun." (Al-Imran 95)¹³⁶

Verse 6:161.

قل إنني هدايني ربي إلى صراط مستقيم ديناً قيميا ملة إبراهيم حنيفاً وما كان من المشركين. (الأنعام 161).

Say (O Muhammad): "Truly, my Lord has guided me to a Straight Path, a right religion, the religion of Ibrahim (Abraham), Hanifa [i.e. the true Islamic Monotheism - to believe in One God (Allah i.e. to worship none but Allah, Alone)] and he was not of Al-Mushrikun. (Al-An'am 161).

10.2 Creation of Adam:

The Qur'an addressed many issues related to the creation of Adam. These include: (A) The purpose of Adam's creation and (B) The essence of Adam.

(A) The purpose of Adam's creation:

The purpose of the creation of humans is discussed in the previous section, and that it is to worship God alone and not to ascribe any deity beside Him. In addition to that, God assigned Adam an additional role; he was chosen to be God's vicegerent on Earth. In Verse 2:30, we read:

وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني جاعل في الأرض خليفة ... (البقرة 30).

Just recall the time when your Lord said to the angels, "I am going to appoint a vicegerent on the Earth..." (Al-Baqara 30)¹³⁷.

In the above verse we see the word 'خليفة' *khaleefah*, which is translated into 'vicegerent', or 'viceroy'. Here, God informs the angels that He shall put Adam (and his descendants) as His vicegerent on Earth. This is a major honor given to Adam for it entrusts him with the dominion over Earth and over everything on Earth. This position and title, however, entails responsibility and accountability. Adam, and humans in general, must be

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Maududi, S.A. (1972) - *Tafhim-ul-Qur'an*.

vigilant to be in touch with their Creator, to worship Him alone, and not ascribe any other deity with Him. In Verse 7:172, we read the following:

وإِذْ أَخَذَ رَبُّكَ مِنْ بَنِي آدَمَ مِنْ ظُهُورِهِمْ ذُرِّيَّتَهُمْ وَأَشْهَدَهُمْ عَلَى أَنْفُسِهِمْ أَلَسْتُ بِرَبِّكُمْ قَالُوا بَلَى شَهِدْنَا أَنْ تَقُولُوا يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ إِنَّا كُنَّا عَنْ هَذَا غَافِلِينَ. (الأعراف 172).

AND WHENEVER thy Sustainer brings forth their offspring from the loins of the children of Adam, He [thus] calls upon them to bear witness about themselves: "Am I not your Sustainer?" - to which they answer: "Yea, indeed, we do bear witness thereto!" [Of this We remind you,] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, "Verily, we were unaware of this"; (Al-A'raf 172).

In Verse 7:35 God tells us (the descendants of Adam) that He will send prophets and messengers to remind us with our obligation to worship Him alone, and that we have to obey and follow these prophets:

يَا بَنِي آدَمَ إِذَا يَأْتَيْكُمْ رَسُولٌ مَقْصُودٌ عَلَيْكُمْ آيَاتِي فَمَنْ اتَّقَى وَأَصْلَحَ فَلَا خَوْفٌ عَلَيْهِمْ وَلَا هُمْ يَحْزَنُونَ. (الأعراف 35).

O CHILDREN of Adam! Whenever there come unto you apostles of your own, conveying My messages unto you, then all who are conscious of Me and live righteously - no fear need they have, and neither shall they grieve; (Al-A'raf 35).

And in Verse 36:60, God tells us that part of our obligations is not to worship Satan or follow him:

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ. (يس 60).
Did I not enjoin on you, O you children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan - since, verily, he is your open foe. (Ys-Sin 60).

(B) The essence of Adam:

In a previous section (Sec. 9.5), water is presented as the source of life to all living things. Aside from that, the Qur'an describes the essence or the origin of Adam (and humans) using the following words:

- It is from 'تراب', which is 'soil' or 'earth'. This word appears in six verses: 3:59, 18:37, 22:5, 30:20, 35:11, and 40:67.
- It is from 'طين', or 'صلصال', which is 'clay' and its different forms such as: 'dried clay', 'fired clay', or 'pottery'. These words appear in twelve verses: 6:2, 7:12, 15:26, 15:28, 15:33, 17:61, 23:12, 32:7, 37:11, 38:71, 38:76, and 55:14,

Whether the origin of man is from 'soil' or 'clay', they both affirm the materialistic nature of humans, and that the composition of the human body is from the same elements that exist on Earth: minerals, organic material, and water.

Here are the six verses that identify 'soil' as the origin of humans:

Verse 3:59,

إن مثل عيسى عند الله كمثل آدم خلقه من تراب ثم قال له كن فيكون. (آل عمران 59).
Verily, in the sight of God, the nature of Jesus is as the nature of Adam, whom He created out of dust [soil] and then said unto him, "Be" - and he is. (Al-Imran 59),

The second part of the verse says that both of Jesus and Adam were created of 'تراب' which is translated into 'dust'. A better translation for 'تراب' is 'soil', and it is added to the verse translation between square brackets. In any case, this affirms that both of Adam and Jesus were normal human beings; they were not godly or alien beings.

Verse 18:37,

قال له صاحبه وهو يحاوره أكفرت بالذي خلقك من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم سواك رجلا. (الكهف 37).
And his friend answered him in the course of their argument: "Wilt thou blaspheme against Him who has created thee out of dust [soil], and then out of a drop of sperm, and in the end has fashioned thee into a [complete] man? (Al-Kahf 37).

Verse 22:5,

يا أيها الناس إن كنتم في ريب من البعث فإننا خلقناكم من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم من علقة ثم من مضغة مخلقة وغير مخلقة لنبين لكم ونقر في الأرحام ما نشاء إلى أجل مسمى ثم نخرجكم طفلا ثم لتبلغوا أشدكم ومنكم من يتوفى ومنكم من يرد إلى أرذل العمر لكيلا يعلم من بعد علم شيئا وترى الأرض هامدة فإذا أنزلنا عليها الماء اهتزت وربت وأنبتت من كل زوج بهيج. (الحج 5).

O MEN! If you are in doubt as to the [truth of] resurrection, [remember that,] verily, We have created [every one of] you out of dust [soil], then out of a drop of sperm, then out of a germ-cell, then out of an embryonic lump complete [in itself] and yet incom-plete so that We might make [your origin] clear unto you. And whatever We will [to be born] We cause to rest in the [mothers'] wombs for a term set [by Us], and then

We bring you forth as infants and [allow you to live] so that [some of] you might attain to maturity: for among you are such as are caused to die [in childhood], just as many a one of you is reduced in old age to a most abject state, ceasing to know anything of what he once knew so well. And [if, O man, thou art still in doubt as to resurrection, consider this:] thou canst see the earth dry and lifeless - and [suddenly,] when We send down waters upon it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of lovely plant! (Al-Hajj 5).

Verse 30:20,

ومن آياته أن خلقكم من تراب ثم إذا أنتم بشر تنتشرون. (الروم 20).

And among His wonders is this: He creates you out of dust [soil] – and then, lo! you become human beings ranging far and wide! (Ar-Rum 20).

Verse 35:11,

والله خلقكم من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم جعلكم أزواجا وما تحمل من أنثى ولا تضع إلا بعلمه وما يعمر من معمر ولا ينقص من عمره إلا في كتاب إن ذلك على الله يسير. (فاطر 11).

And [remember:] God creates [every one of] you out of dust [soil], then out of a drop of sperm; and then He fashions you into either of the two sexes. And no female conceives or gives birth unless it be with His knowledge; and none that is long-lived has his days lengthened - and neither is aught lessened of his days - unless it be thus laid down in [God's] decree: for, behold, all this is easy for God. (Fatir 11).

Verse 40:67,

هو الذي خلقكم من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم من علقة ثم يخرجكم طفلا ثم لتبلغوا أشدكم ثم لتكونوا شيوخا ومنكم من يتوفى من قبل ولتبلغوا أجلا مسمى ولعلكم تعقلون. (غافر 67).

It is He who creates you out of dust [soil], and then out of a drop of sperm, and then out of a germ-cell; and then He brings you forth as children; and then [He ordains] that you reach maturity, and then, that you grow old - though some of you [He causes to] die earlier -: and [all this He ordains] so that you might reach a term set [by Him], and that you might [learn to] use your reason. (Ghafir 67).

Upon looking into the above verses, we see that in Verses 18:37, 22:5, 35:11 and 40:67, the word 'soil' is followed by the word 'sperm'. These verses discuss the reproduction process in humans and the stages of creation in

the womb of the mother. Since 'soil' is the best medium for plant growth, the choice of this word in these verses is in accordance with their context.

Regarding Verse 30:20, we read in the verse that follows it: *'And among His wonders is this: He creates for you mates out of your own kind. so that you might incline towards them, and He engenders love and tenderness between you: in this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who think!'* So, again, these verses discuss the process of reproduction at a higher level; the level of man and wife and the bonding between them.

The twelve verses that identify 'clay' and its variations as the origin of humans are the following:

Verse 6:2,

هو الذي خلقكم من طين ثم قضى أجلا وأجل مسمى عنده ثم أنتم تمترون. (الأنعام 2).
He it is who has created you out of clay, and then has decreed a term [for you] - a term known [only] to him. And yet you doubt (Al-An'am 2).

Verse 7:12,

قال ما منعك ألا تسجد إذ أمرتك قال أنا خير منه خلقتني من نار وخلقته من طين. (الأعراف 12).
[And God] said: "What has kept thee from prostrating thyself when I commanded thee?" Answered [Iblis]: "I am better than he: Thou hast created me out of fire, whereas him Thou hast created out of clay." (Al-A'raf 12).

Verse 15:26,

ولقد خلقنا الإنسان من صلصال من حمأ مسنون. (الحجر 26).
AND, INDEED, We have created man out of sounding clay, out of dark-slime transmuted (Al-Hijr).

Verse 15:28,

وإذ قال ربك للملائكة إني خالق بشرا من صلصال من حمأ مسنون. (الحجر 28).
And lo! Thy Sustainer said unto the angels: "Behold, I am about to create mortal man out of sounding clay, out of dark slime transmuted; (Al-Hijr 28).

Verse 15:33,

قال لم أكن لأسجد لبشر خلقته من صلصال من حمأ مسنون. (الحجر 33).

[Iblis] replied: "It is not for me to prostrate myself before mortal man whom Thou hast created out of sounding clay, out of dark slime transmuted!" (Al-Hijr 33).

Verse 17:61,

وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس قال أسجدت لمن خلقت طينا. (الإسراء 61).
AND LO! We said unto the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam"-whereupon they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis. Said he: "Shall I prostrate myself before one whom Thou hast created out of clay?" (Al-Isra 61).

Verse 23:12,

ولقد خلقنا الإنسان من سلالة من طين. (المؤمنون 12).
NOW, INDEED, We create man out of the essence of clay, (Al-Mu'minun 12).

Verse 32:7,

الذي أحسن كل شيء خلقه وبدأ خلق الإنسان من طين. (السجدة 7).
who makes most excellent everything that He creates. Thus, He begins the creation of man out of clay; (As-Sajda 7).

Verse 37:11,

فاستفتهم أهم أشد خلقا أم من خلقنا إنا خلقناهم من طين لازب. (الصافات 11).
AND NOW ask those [who deny the truth] to enlight-en thee: Were they more difficult to create than all those [untold marvels] that We have created? - for, behold, them have We created out of [mere] clay commingled with water! (As-Saffat 11).

Verse 38:71,

إذ قال ربك للملائكة إني خالق بشرا من طين. (ص 71).
[For,] lo, thy Sustainer said unto the angels: "Behold, I am about to create a human being out of clay; (Sad 71).

Verse 38:76,

قال أنا خير منه خلقتني من نار وخلقته من طين. (ص 76).
Answered [Iblis]: "I am better than he: Thou hast created me out of fire, whereas him Thou hast created out of clay." (Sad 76)

Verse 55:14,

خلق الإنسان من صلصال كالفخار. (الرحمن 14).

He has created man out of sounding clay, like pottery, (Ar-Rahman 14).

Upon examining the above verses, we see that they can be classified into two groups depending on the messages carried by these verses:

- They discuss the contrast between human's origin compared to jinn's origin or Satan's origin. We see this in Verses 7:12, 15:26, 15:28, 15:33, 17:61, 38:71, 38:76 and 55:14. In most of these verses, we read that Satan or 'Iblis' rebelled against God and refused to prostrate before Adam because Adam was created from 'clay', and Satan and the *jinn* were created from 'fire.'
- They indicate the humble origin of man as a reminder for him to acknowledge this fact and not to disregard God's commandments. We see this in Verses: 6:2, 23:12, 32:7, and 37:11.

Clay does not support plant growth for it prevents the penetration of water, and does not allow nutrients to reach the roots of the plants. It is mostly used as a building material and in pottery. Again, the choice of the word 'clay' in these verses is the most appropriate for their context to emphasize the difference between the nature of humans and the nature of jinn, spirits or angels.

10.3 The Story of Adam, the Angels and Iblis:

After the creation of Adam, the angels were ordered to prostrate before him and bow to him. This fact is mentioned in five different Surahs. But before we discuss this issue, let's examine a verse that is very relevant to the issue at hand. It is Verse 33:72.

إنا عرضنا الأمانة على السماوات والأرض والجبال فأبين أن يحملنها وأشفقن منها وحملها الإنسان إنه كان ظلوما جهولا. (الأحزاب 72).

Truly, We did offer AlAmanah (the trust or moral responsibility or honesty and all the duties which Allah has ordained) to the heavens and the earth, and the mountains, but they declined to bear it and were

afraid of it (i.e. afraid of Allah's Torment). But man bore it. Verily, he was unjust (to himself) and ignorant (of its results). (Al-Ahzab 72)¹³⁸

The above verse explains to us why humans are at the top ranking among God's creations. Humans are above the angels. This is because angels are benevolent servants of God. They are created to obey God and perform good actions; they don't have free will. In Sec. 10.1, we have seen that man was appointed God's vicegerent on Earth, and that that title entailed benefits, responsibilities, and accountability. In the above verse, we see the word 'الأمانة' *AlAmanah*; being entrusted to man, and that what puts him at the top ranking of all God's creations. This term encompasses the mind, the consciousness, the knowledge, the free will, and the tools to make the right choice. And then, man is given the choice, either to obey and worship God alone, or disobey Him.

On this, Qutb writes the following:

"It is a huge burden that this small creature, with little power and a short life, and with pressurizing desires and inclinations, has undertaken. In so doing, he runs great risks. Hence, man is 'prone to be wicked,' putting himself in the wrong, and 'foolish,' not knowing his ability. This is true in relation to the great responsibility he has shouldered. However, when he fulfils this trust, acquires the knowledge leading him to his Lord, knows His law and obeys Him fully, he becomes equipped with the knowledge, the guidance and the obedience which bring him to the level of ease and perfection enjoyed by creatures like the heavens, earth and mountains, which obey God and follow His law naturally and directly. When man attains this level, while aware, conscious and exercising free choice, he attains a noble standard and is given a unique position among God's creation.

The acquisition of knowledge, the ability to choose and the willingness to be accountable constitute the quality that distinguishes man among God's creatures. This is the quality that earns man his position of honour, declared by God to those on high as He ordered the angels to prostrate themselves before Adam..."¹³⁹

¹³⁸ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.

¹³⁹ Qutb, S. - *In the Shade of the Qur'an*, Vol. 14, pp 94-95.

So, the angels were ordered to prostrate before Adam and bow to him. We read this in Verses 2:34, 7:11, 17:61, 18:50, and 20:116.

Verse 2:34,

وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس أبى واستكبر وكان من الكافرين. (البقرة 34).
And when We told the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam!" - they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis, who refused and gloried in his arrogance; and thus he became one of those who deny the truth. (Al-Baqara 34).

Verse 7:11,

ولقد خلقناكم ثم صورناكم ثم قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس لم يكن من الساجدين. (الأعراف 11).

Yea, indeed, We have created you, and then formed you; and then We said unto the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam!" - whereupon they [all] prostrated themselves, save Iblis: he was not among those who prostrated themselves. (Al-A'raf 11).

Verse 17:61,

وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس قال أسجدت لمن خلقت طينا. (الإسراء 61).
AND LO! We said unto the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam"-whereupon they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis. Said he: "Shall I prostrate myself before one whom Thou hast created out of clay?" (Al-Isra 61).

Verse 18:50,

وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس كان من الجن ففسق عن أمر ربه أفئذخونه وذريته أولياء من دوني وهم لكم عدو بئس للظالمين بدلا. (الكهف 50).

AND [remember that] when We told the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam," they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis: he [too] was one of those invisible beings, but then he turned away from his Sustainer's command. Will you, then, take him and his cohorts for (your), masters instead of Me, although they are your foe? How vile an exchange on the evildoers' part! (Al-Kahf 50).

And Verse 20:116,

وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس أبى. (طه 116).

For [thus it was:] when We told the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam!"- they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis, who refused [to do it]; (Ta-Ha 116).

In all of the above verses, the angels obeyed the order to bow and prostrate themselves before Adam. Satan (*Iblis*) was the exception; he rebelled against God and refused to bow to Adam. Satan was not from the angels, he was from the *jinn*. The angels were made of light; Satan and the *jinn* were made of fire. Initially, Satan was from the good *jinn*; he used to accompany the angels and worship God with them. When Adam was created, appointed God's vicegerent on Earth, and entrusted with *AlAmanah*, Satan became envious with Adam. Verse 17:61 above tells us that Satan rebelled and refused to bow to Adam because he was made of fire and Adam was made of clay. Satan considered himself superior to Adam.

By rebelling against God and disobeying Him, Satan deserved God's wrath. Satan was filled with destructive envy, and he took it on himself to be Adam's eternal foe, to tempt him, beguile him, and lead him astray as demonstrated in the following verses:

Verse 15:39,

قال رب بما أغويتني لأزينن لهم في الأرض ولأغوينهم أجمعين. (الحجر 39).
[Whereupon Iblis] said: "O my Sustainer! Since Thou hast thwarted me, I shall indeed make [all that is evil] on earth seem goodly to them, and shall most certainly beguile them-into grievous error - (Al-Hijr 39).

Verse 38:82,

قال فبعزتك لأغوينهم أجمعين. (ص 82).
[Whereupon Iblis] said: "Then [I swear] by Thy very might: I shall most certainly beguile them all into grievous error – (Sad 82).

And Verse 4:119.

ولأضلنهم ولأمنينهم ولأمرنهم فليبتكن آذان الأنعام ولأمرنهم فليغيرن خلق الله ومن يتخذ الشيطان وليا من دون الله فقد خسر خسرانا مبينا (النساء 119).
and shall lead them astray, and fill them with vain desires; and I shall command them - and they will cut off the ears of cattle [in idolatrous sacrifice]; and I shall command them - and they will corrupt God's

creation!" But all who take Satan rather than God for their master do indeed, most clearly, lose all: (an-Nisa 119).

There are other verses in the Qur'an in which God affirms Satan enmity to Adam (and his descendants), and warns against following Satan:

Verse 4:120,

يَعِدُهُمْ وَيُمْنِيهِمْ وَمَا يَعْدهُم الشَّيْطَانُ إِلَّا غُرُورًا. (النساء 120).
he holds out promises to them, and fills them with vain desires: yet whatever Satan promises them is but meant to delude the mind. (An-Nisa 120).

Verse 35:6,

إِنَّ الشَّيْطَانَ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ فَاتَّخِذُوهُ عَدُوًّا إِنَّمَا يَدْعُو حُزْبَهُ لِيَكُونُوا مِنْ أَصْحَابِ السَّعِيرِ. (فاطر 6).
Behold, Satan is a foe unto you: so treat him as a foe. He but calls on his followers to the end that they might find themselves among such as are des-tined for the blazing flame – (Fatir 6).

Verse 36:60,

أَلَمْ أَعْهَدْ إِلَيْكُمْ يَا بَنِي آدَمَ أَنْ لَا تَعْبُدُوا الشَّيْطَانَ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ. (يس 60).
Did I not enjoin on you, O you children of Adam, that you should not worship Satan – since, verily, he is your open foe. (Ya-Sin 60).

And Verse 43:62.

وَلَا يَصْدَنْكُمُ الشَّيْطَانُ إِنَّهُ لَكُمْ عَدُوٌّ مُبِينٌ. (الزخرف 62).
And let not Satan bars you [from it] - for, verily, he is your open foe! (Az-Zukhruf 62).

10.4 How Humans Differ from Other Creatures:

In Verse 33:72 (discussed above), the Qur'an used the term '*AlAmanah*' and the capacity to '*bear AlAmanah*' as the distinguishing characteristic that made Adam and humans superior to all other creatures. There are more verses that tell us why human are special creatures. In Verses 2:31-33, we read the following:

وَعَلَّمَ آدَمَ الْأَسْمَاءَ كُلَّهَا ثُمَّ عَرَضَهُمْ عَلَى الْمَلَائِكَةِ فَقَالَ أَنْبِئُونِي بِأَسْمَاءِ هَؤُلَاءِ إِنْ كُنْتُمْ صَادِقِينَ (31) قَالُوا سُبْحَانَكَ لَا عِلْمَ لَنَا إِلَّا مَا عَلَّمْتَنَا إِنَّكَ أَنْتَ الْعَلِيمُ الْحَكِيمُ (32) قَالَ يَا آدَمُ أَنْبِئْهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ فَلَمَّا أَنْبَأَهُمْ بِأَسْمَائِهِمْ قَالَ أَلَمْ أَقُلْ لَكُمْ إِنِّي أَعْلَمُ الْغَيْبَ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَأَعْلَمُ مَا تُبْدُونَ وَمَا كُنْتُمْ تَكْتُمُونَ (33). (البقرة 31-33).

31. *And He imparted unto Adam the names of all things; then He brought them within the ken of the angels and said: "Declare unto Me the names of these [things], if what you say is true."*

32. *They replied: "Limitless art Thou in Thy glory! No knowledge have we save that which Thou hast imparted unto us. Verily, Thou alone art all-knowing, truly wise."*

33. *Said He: "O Adam, convey unto them the names of these [things]." And as soon as [Adam] had conveyed unto them their names, [God] said: "Did I not say unto you, 'Verily, I alone know the hidden reality of the heavens and the earth, and know all that you bring into the open and all that you would conceal'?" (Al-Baqara 31-33).*

The above verses tell us that what made Adam special is that God imparted unto him 'the names of all things.' But does 'knowing the names of things' qualify it to be a special capability that makes Adam superior to all creatures even superior to the angels? The answer to this question: It is unlikely. The term 'names of all things' must point to a unique capability that distinguishes humans from other creatures.

Scientific research has identified what distinguishes humans from other creatures. It is 'language' and 'cognition.' It is the capability to manipulate information symbolically. Recent studies have shown that 'language' and 'cognition' capabilities were acquired by humans in an abrupt manner; they were not developed by an evolution process. On this, Ian Tattersall, a renowned paleoanthropologist, writes the following:

"As far as we know, Homo sapiens is totally unique in significantly expressing an ability to manipulate information symbolically... Our strange intellectual faculty is attributable to a novel neural conformation, a change in the internal organization and wiring of our brains... The results of this acquisition were revolutionary: in today's jargon, they were "emergent," whereby an adventitious

change or addition to a pre-existing structure led to a whole new level of complexity in function."¹⁴⁰

Tattersall dates the abrupt and sudden event as probably lying somewhere within the very narrow window of 50,000 to 100,000 years ago. He next links 'cognitive style' to the use of language:

*"The other thing everybody associates with our cognitive style is our use of language. Indeed, it is hardly overstating the case to characterize language as the ultimate symbolic activity, allowing as it does the generation of an infinite number of statements from a finite group of elements. Like thought, language involves dissecting the world around us into a huge vocabulary of symbols that are then combined, according to rules, to make statements not only about the world as it is directly perceived, but also as it might be. And it is virtually impossible to imagine our thought processes in its absence, for without the mediation of language those thought processes would be entirely intuitive and nondeclarative, merely involving the association of incoming stimuli with remembered ones, and responding accordingly."*¹⁴¹

Science has proven that indeed humans are superior to all creatures (earthly creatures.) In a published scientific research, it is proven that human possess unique capabilities and capacities that no other creature possess them.

A Harvard scientist, Marc Hauser identified four distinguishing ingredients of human cognition, and showed how these capacities make human thought unique. These four novel components of human thought are the ability to combine and recombine different types of information and knowledge in order to gain new understanding; to apply the same "rule" or solution to one problem to a different and new situation; to create and easily understand symbolic representations of computation and sensory input; and to detach modes of thought from raw sensory and perceptual input.¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ Tattersall, Ian (2012) - *Masters of the Planet. The Search for Our Human Origins*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp 204-205.

¹⁴¹ Ibid, p 210.

¹⁴² <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2008/02/080217102137.htm>

These four capabilities are: generative computation, promiscuous combination of ideas, the use of mental symbols, and abstract thought.¹⁴³

1. Generative computation

Humans can generate a practically limitless variety of words and concepts. We do so through two modes of operation recursive and combinatorial. The recursive operation allows us to apply a learned rule to create new expressions. In combinatorial operations, we mix different learned elements to create a new concept.

2. Promiscuous combination of ideas

"Promiscuous combination of ideas," Hauser explained, "allows the mingling of different domains of knowledge such as art, sex, space, causality and friendship thereby generating new laws, social relationships and technologies."

3. Mental symbols

Mental symbols are our way of encoding sensory experiences. They form the basis of our complex systems of language and communication. We may choose to keep our mental symbols to ourselves, or represent them to others using words or pictures.

4. Abstract thought

Abstract thought is the contemplation of things beyond what we can sense.

"This is not to say that our mental faculties sprang fully formed out of nowhere," Hauser wrote. "Researchers have found some of the building blocks of human cognition in other species. But these building blocks make up only the cement foot print of the skyscraper that is the human mind. The evolutionary origins of our cognitive abilities thus remain rather hazy. Clarity is emerging from novel insights and experimental technologies, however."

The maturity of the research on the language and cognition capacities in humans, and its publication took place in the late 20th and early 21st

¹⁴³ <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/origin-of-the-mind/>

centuries. So, again we see the Qur'an precedes science discovery by more than 1,250 years.

10.5 The Account of the Fall in the Qur'an:

The story of the fall of Adam and Eve from Paradise (the Garden) to Earth is mentioned in several Surahs in the Qur'an. It is important to recall here that the purpose of Adam's creation was to be God's vicegerent on Earth, and for Adam to have dominion over Earth. So, although Adam was put initially in the Paradise, it was in the foreknowledge of God that Adam would eventually come down to Earth to start his job as God's vicegerent on Earth.

This is an important doctrine in the Qur'an that God is Omniscient and All-Knowing. He knows exactly the fate of each one of us, what actions we shall take, and what will happens to us. Each one of us still has the free will to choose how to act because we are not omniscient; we don't know the future.

The account of the Adam's fall from paradise is reported in Verses 2:35-37, 7:19-23, and 20:115-122. The following analysis to these verses emphasizes the differences between the Qur'anic and the Biblical accounts of the Fall.

Verses 2:35-37,

وقلنا يا آدم اسكن أنت وزوجك الجنة وكلا منها رغدا حيث شئتما ولا تقربا هذه الشجرة فتكونا من الظالمين (35) فأزلهما الشيطان عنها فأخرجهما مما كانا فيه وقلنا اهبطوا بعضكم لبعض عدو ولكم في الأرض مستقر ومتاع إلى حين (36) فتلقى آدم من ربه كلمات فتاب عليه إنه هو التواب الرحيم (37). (البقرة 35-37).

35. And We said: "O Adam, dwell thou and thy wife in this garden, and eat freely thereof, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become wrongdoers."

36. But Satan caused them both to stumble therein, and thus brought about the loss of their erstwhile state. And so We said: "Down with you, [and be henceforth] enemies unto one another; and on earth you shall have your abode and your livelihood for a while!"

37. Thereupon Adam received words [of guidance] from his Sustainer, and He accepted his repentance: for, verily, He alone is the-Acceptor of Repentance, the Dispenser of Grace. (Al-Baqarah 35-37)

From the above we can see that the devil deceived both of Adam and Eve; he did not start with Eve. Actually, in Verse 2:37 above there is a hint that the fault was Adam's fault because the verse tells us that God pardoned Adam and accepted his repentance (Adam realized his fault, and repented and asked God for forgiveness.) In Verse 2:37 we read a clear affirmation that there is no such thing as 'original sin' that passes down from the father to his progeny. Adam repented, God accepted his repentance and forgave him. This is a termination of Adam's sin; the case is closed!

In Verse 2:36 above, God affirms the eternal enmity between Satan and humans. It was Satan who deceived Adam to commit a sin, and he will continue to deceive Adam's children to the end of times. Unfortunately, few people realize this fact. Many people fall to the temptation of Satan and commit all types of sins.

Verses 7:19-25,

ويا آدم اسكن أنت وزوجك الجنة فكلا من حيث شئتما ولا تقربا هذه الشجرة فتكونا من الظالمين (19) فوسوس لهما الشيطان ليبيدي لهما ما ووري عنهما من سواتهما وقال ما نهاكما ربكما عن هذه الشجرة إلا أن تكونا ملكين أو تكونا من الخالدين (20) وقاسمهما إني لكما لمن الناصحين (21) فدلاهما بغرور فلما ذاقا الشجرة بدت لهما سواتهما وطفقا يخصفان عليهما من ورق الجنة وناداهما ربهما ألم أنهكما عن تلكما الشجرة وأقل لكما إن الشيطان لكما عدو مبين (22) قالوا ربنا ظلمنا أنفسنا وإن لم تغفر لنا وترحمنا لنكونن من الخاسرين (23) قال اهبطوا بعضكم لبعض عدو ولكم في الأرض مستقر ومتاع إلى حين (24) قال فيها تحيون وفيها تموتون ومنها تخرجون (25). (الأعراف 19-25).

19. And [as for thee], O Adam', dwell thou and thy wife in this garden, and eat, both of you, whatever you may wish; but do not approach this one tree, lest you become evildoers!"

20. Thereupon Satan whispered unto the two with a view to making them conscious of their nakedness, of which [hitherto] they had been unaware; and he said: "Your Sustainer has but forbidden you this tree lest you two become [as] angels, or lest you live forever."

21. And he swore unto them, "Verily, I am of those who wish you well indeed!"

22. -and thus he led them on with deluding thoughts. But as soon as the two had tasted [the fruit] of the tree, they became conscious of their nakedness; and they began to cover themselves with pieced-together leaves from the garden. And their Sustainer called unto them: "Did I not forbid that tree unto you and tell you, 'Verily, Satan is your open foe'?"

23. *The two replied: "O our Sustainer! We have sinned against ourselves -and unless Thou grant us forgiveness and bestow Thy mercy upon us, we shall most certainly be lost!"*
24. *Said He: "Down with you, [and be henceforth] enemies unto one another, having on earth your abode and livelihood for a while:*
25. *there shall you live" - He added - "and there shall you die, and thence shall you be brought forth [on Resurrection Day]! (Al-A'raf 19-25).*

In Verse 7:20 above, Satan described the forbidden tree as the Tree of Eternity. It was not the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil. Here, we read again that the blame of eating from the forbidden tree is shared by both of Adam and Eve for they were both deceived by the devil and they both ate from the forbidden tree.

From other sources, we are told that God created the animals before the creation of Adam and Eve¹⁴⁴. It is possible, therefore, that Adam and Eve witnessed some animals live their lives and die after a certain time, and they were worried that they would suffer the same fate. So, the temptation from Satan was that if they eat from that particular tree, they will not die and would live an eternal life.

Verses 20:115-122.

ولقد عهدنا إلى آدم من قبل فنسي ولم نجد له عزما (115) وإذ قلنا للملائكة اسجدوا لآدم فسجدوا إلا إبليس أبى (116) فقلنا يا آدم إن هذا عدو لك ولزوجك فلا يخرجنكما من الجنة فتشقى (117) إن لك ألا تجوع فيها ولا تعرى (118) وأنت لا تظمأ فيها ولا تضحى (119) فوسوس إليه الشيطان قال يا آدم هل أدلك على شجرة الخلد وملك لا يبلى (120) فأكلتا منها فبدت لهما سوءاتهما وطفقا يخصفان عليهما من ورق الجنة وعصى آدم ربه فغوى (121) ثم اجتبا به فتاب عليه وهدى (122). (طه 115-122).

115. *AND, INDEED, long ago did We impose Our commandment on Adam; but he forgot it, and We found no firmness of purpose in him.*

116. *For [thus it was:] when We told the angels, "Prostrate yourselves before Adam!" - they all prostrated themselves, save Iblis, who refused [to do it];*

¹⁴⁴ A hadith in Sahih Muslim. See for example:

<https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/20193/>

117. and thereupon We said: "O Adam! Verily, this is a foe unto thee and thy wife: so let him not drive the two of you out of this garden and render thee unhappy.

118. Behold, it is provided for thee that thou shalt not hunger here or feel naked,

119. and that thou shalt not thirst here or suffer from the heat of the sun."

120. But Satan whispered unto him, saying: "O Adam! Shall I lead thee to the tree of life eternal; and [thus] to a kingdom that will never decay?"

121. And so the two ate [of the fruit] thereof: and thereupon they became conscious of their nakedness and began to cover themselves with pieced-together leaves from the garden. And [thus] did Adam disobey his Sustainer, and thus did he fall into grievous error.

122. Thereafter, [however,] his Sustainer elected him [for His grace], and accepted his repentance, and bestowed His guidance upon him, (Ta-Ha 115-122)

In the above verses, the answer to who should be blamed for eating first from the forbidden tree is revealed. It was Adam. Verse 20:115 above tells us that Adam did not have the firm will-power to honor his covenant with God not to eat from the forbidden tree. Then, Verse 20:120 tells us that the devil deceived Adam to eat from the tree (and Adam in turn persuaded Eve). And Verse 20:121 confirms to us that it was Adam who disobeyed his God.

The fact that Adam was himself responsible for the Fall is a logical conclusion. He was the dominant figure and the main player in the story. He was the one authorized to make the important decisions; and he should be held responsible for these decisions.

In Verse 20:120, we read again that Satan called the forbidden tree '*the tree of eternal life*.'

10.6 The Noachian Deluge:

Floods are common recurrent disasters. Every year, the weather system on Earth creates 30-40 hurricanes and typhoons; at least half of them cause

major flooding and result in thousands of casualty. So, the occurrence of a major flood at the time of Noah is indisputable. What is disputable is the occurrence of a universal flood that covered the whole Earth as the Bible claims.

The Qur'an mentioned the story of Noah and the flood several times in different Surahs (more than 15 different Surahs). In all of these accounts, the Qur'an points to a local flood; there is no indication to a universal flood. The Noachian Deluge was a local flood that was intended as a punishment to the unbelievers from Noah's people.

To begin with, Noah was not a universal prophet who was sent to all people; he was sent only to a certain group of people (Noah's people). On this regard the Qur'an says in Verse 7:59:

لقد أرسلنا نوحا إلى قومه فقال يا قوم اعبدوا الله ما لكم من إله غيره إني أخاف عليكم عذاب يوم عظيم.
(الأعراف 59)

*INDEED, We sent forth Noah unto **his people**, and he said: "O my people! Worship God alone: you have no deity other than Him. Verily, I fear lest suffering befall you on an awesome Day!" (Al-A'raf 59)*

And in Verse 11:25.

ولقد أرسلنا نوحا إلى قومه إني لكم نذير مبين. (هود 25).

*AND INDEED, [it was with the same message that] We sent forth Noah unto **his people**: "Behold, I come unto you with the plain warning. (Hud 25)*

We see in the two verses above that Noah was sent unto 'his people.' This fact is repeated several more times in Verses 11:36, 14:9, 23:23, 25:37, 29:14, 38:12, 50:12, 51:46, 54:9, and 71:1. This is very significant for it determines the domain of responsibility and the range of accountability. In other words, this means that other people on Earth at that time were not responsible for the actions of Noah's people. (This is a universal God's law. When Lot's people insisted on their sins and crimes, a punishment was inflicted on them only and not on other people; and when Pharaoh and his people terrorized Moses and the Israelites, a punishment with sent on them only and not on other people; .. and so on).

Secondly, the Qur'an clarified the purpose of Noah's flood; it was sent as a punishment of the disbelievers, the deniers and the transgressors from Noah's people. In some Surahs the story is told in some detail over several verses. In other Surahs, the story is mentioned briefly as a demonstration of God's law to reward the believers and punish the disbelievers. So, let's read the Qur'anic accounts of the Story of Noah and the flood and the justification of this flood in different Surahs:

A. A punishment to the deniers, and who gave him the lie 'الذين كذبوا':

Verse 7:64,

فكذبوه فأنجيناه والذين معه في الفلك وأغرقنا الذين كذبوا بآياتنا إنهم كانوا قوماً عَمِينَ. (الأعراف 64).
And yet they gave him the lie! And so We saved him and those who stood by him, in the ark, the while We caused those who had given the lie to Our messages to drown: verily, they were blind folk! (Al-A'raf 64).

Verse 10:73,

فكذبوه فنجيناه ومن معه في الفلك وجعلناهم خلائف وأغرقنا الذين كذبوا بآياتنا فانظر كيف كان عاقبة المنذرين. (يونس 73).
And yet they gave him the lie! And so We saved him and all who stood by him, in the ark, and made them inherit [the earth], the while We caused those who gave the lie to Our messages to drown: behold, then, what happened in the end to those people who had been warned [in vain]! (Yunus 73).

Verses 21:76-77,

ونوحاً إذ نادى من قبل فاستجبنا له فنجيناه وأهله من الكرب العظيم (76) ونصرناه من القوم الذين كذبوا بآياتنا إنهم كانوا قوم سوء فأغرقناهم أجمعين (77). (الأنبياء 76-77).
 76. AND [remember] Noah - [how,] when He called out [unto Us], long before [the time of Abraham and Lot], We responded to him and saved him and his house-hold from that awesome calamity;
 77. and [how] We succoured him against the people who had given the lie to Our messages: verily, they were people lost in evil - and [so] We caused them all to drown. (Al-Anbiya 76-77)

Verse 25:37,

وقوم نوح لما كذبوا الرسل أغرقناهم وجعلناهم للناس آية وأعتدنا للظالمين عذاباً أليماً. (الفرقان 37).

And [think of] the people of Noah: when they gave the lie to [one of] the apostles, We caused them to drown, and made them a symbol for all mankind: for, grievous suffering have We readied for all who [knowingly] do wrong! (Al-Furqan 37)

Verses 26:119-120,

فأنجيناه ومن معه في الفلك المشحون (119) ثم أغرقنا بعد الباقيين (120). (الشعراء 119-120).
 119. *And so We saved him and those [who were] with him in the fully-laden ark,*
 120. *and then We caused those who stayed behind to drown. (Ash-Shu'ara 119-120)*

Verse 37:82,

ثم أغرقنا الآخرين. (الصافات 82).
[and so We saved him and those who followed him] and then We caused the others [who didn't believe him] to drown. (As-Saffat 82)

Verses 38:12-14,

كذبت قبلهم قوم نوح وعاد وفرعون ذو الأوتاد (12) وثمود وقوم لوط وأصحاب الأيكة أولئك الأحزاب (13) إن كل إلا كذب الرسل فحق عقاب (14). (ص 12-14).
 12. *To the truth gave the lie aforetime Noah's people, and [the tribe of] Ad, and Pharaoh of the [many] tent-poles,*
 13. *and [the tribe of] Thamud, and the people of Lot, and the dwellers of the wooded dales [of Madyan]: they all were leagued together, [as it were, in their unbelief:]*
 14. *not one [was there] but gave the lie to the apostles - and thereupon My retribution fell due. (Sad 12-14)*

Verses 50:12-14,

كذبت قبلهم قوم نوح وأصحاب الرس وثمود (12) وعاد وفرعون وإخوان لوط (13) وأصحاب الأيكة وقوم تبع كل كذب الرسل فحق وعيد (14). (ق 12-14).
 12. *[Long] before those [who now deny resurrection] did Noah's people give the lie to this truth, and [so did] the folk of Ar-Rass, and [the tribes of] Thamud*
 13. *and Ad, and Pharaoh, and Lot's brethren,*
 14. *and the dwellers of the wooded dales [of Madyan], and the people of Tubba: they all gave the lie to the apostles - and thereupon that whereof I had warned [them] came true. (Qaf 12-14)*

And Verse 54:9.

كذبت قبلهم قوم نوح فكذبوا عبيدنا وقالوا مجنون وازدجر. (القمر 9).

[LONG] BEFORE those [who now deny resurrection] did Noah's people call it a lie; and they gave the lie to Our servant and said, "Mad is he!" - and he was repulsed. (Al-Qamar 9)

B. A punishment to the wrongful and evildoers 'الذين ظلموا':

Verses 11:36-37,

وأوحى إلى نوح أنه لن يؤمن من قومك إلا من قد آمن فلا تبتئس بما كانوا يفعلون (36) واصنع الفلك بأعيننا ووحينا ولا تخاطبني في الذين ظلموا إنهم مغرقون (37) (هود 36-37).

36. AND THIS was revealed unto Noah: "Never will any of thy people believe except those who have already attained to faith. Be not, then, distressed by anything that they may do,

37. but build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark [that shall save thee and those who follow thee]; and do not appeal to Me in behalf of those who are bent on evildoing for, behold, they are destined to be drowned!" (Hud 36-43).

Verse 23:27,

فأوحينا إليه أن اصنع الفلك بأعيننا ووحينا فإذا جاء أمرنا وفار التنور فاسلك فيها من كل زوجين اثنين وأهلك إلا من سبق عليه القول منهم ولا تخاطبني في الذين ظلموا إنهم مغرقون. (المؤمنون 27).

Thereupon We inspired him thus: "Build, under Our eyes and according to Our inspiration, the ark [that shall save thee and those who follow thee]. And when Our judgment comes to pass, and waters gush forth in torrents over the face of the earth, place on board of this [ark] one pair of each [kind of animal] of either sex, as well as thy family - excepting those on whom sentence has already been passed; and do not appeal to Me [any more] in behalf of those who are bent on evildoing - for, behold, they are destined to be drowned! (Al-Mu'minun 27)

And Verse 29:40.

فكلا أخذنا بذنبه فمنهم من أرسلنا عليه حاصبا ومنهم من أخذته الصيحة ومنهم من خسفنا به الأرض ومنهم من أغرقنا وما كان الله ليظلمهم ولكن كانوا أنفسهم يظلمون. (العنكبوت 40).

or, every one of them, did We take to task for his sin: and so, upon some of them We let loose a deadly storm wind; and some of them were overtaken by a [sudden] blast; and some of them We caused to be

*swallowed by the earth: and some of them We caused to drown. And it was not God who wronged them, but it was they who had **wronged themselves**. (Al-Ankabut 40)*

C. A punishment to the disbelievers, who committed grave sins, and the lecherous:

Verse 14:9,

ألم يأتكم نبياً الذين من قبلكم قوم نوح وعاد وثمود والذين من بعدهم لا يعلمهم إلا الله جاءتهم رسلهم بالبينات فردوا أيديهم في أفواههم وقالوا إنا كافرين بما أرسلتم به وإنا لفي شك مما تدعونا إليه مريب. (إبراهيم 9).

HAVE THE STORIES of those [deniers of the truth] who lived before you never yet come within your ken - [the stories of] the people of Noah, and of [the tribes of] `Ad and Thamud, and of those who came after them? None knows them [now] save God. There came unto them their apostles with all evidence of the truth -but they covered their mouths with their hands and answered: "Behold, we refuse to regard as true the message with which you [claim to] have been entrusted; and, behold, we are in grave doubt, amounting to suspicion, about [the meaning of] your call to us!" (Ibrahim 9)

Verse 51:46,

وقوم نوح من قبل إنهم كانوا قوماً فاسقين. (الذاريات 46)

*And [thus, too, We destroyed] Noah's people aforetime: for they were **iniquitous** folk. (Adh-Dhariyat 46)*

And Verse 71:25.

مما **خطيئاتهم** أغرقوا فأدخلوا ناراً فلم يجدوا لهم من دون الله أنصاراً. (نوح 25).

*And so, because of **their sins**, they were drowned [in the great flood], and were doomed to suffer the fire [of the hereafter]; and they found none who could succour them against God. (Nuh 25)*

The above quotations from the Qur'an about Noah and the flood are somewhat lengthy; but, this is done on purpose to show that there is no mention of a universal flood in the Qur'an. The Qur'an repeats again and again that Noah's flood was a local flood that was intended to be a punishment to the disbelievers, the deniers, the lecherous and those who gave Noah the lie from Noah's people. By this repetition, the Qur'an seems

to rebuke the morally-repulsive biblical account of a universal Noachian flood, not once or twice, but 15 times.

11- The Human Body

11.1 Source of Semen:

In the Qur'an, there are verses that locate from where semen is generated. In Verses 86:5-7, we read:

فليُنظر الإنسان مم خلق (5) خلق من ماء دافق (6) يخرج من بين الصلب والترائب (7). (الطارق 5-7).

5. LET MAN, then, observe out of what he has been created:

6. he has been created out of a seminal fluid

7. issuing from between the loins [of man] and the pelvic arch [of woman] (At-Tariq 5-7).

In embryonic stages, the reproductive organs of the male and female, i.e. the testicles and the ovaries, begin their development near the kidney between the spinal column and the eleventh and twelfth ribs. Later they descend; the female gonads (ovaries) stop in the pelvis while the male gonads (testicles) continue their descent before birth to reach the scrotum through the inguinal canal. Even in adulthood after the descent of the reproductive organs, these organs receive their nerve supply and blood supply from the Abdominal Aorta, which is in the area between the backbone (spinal column) and the ribs. The lymphatic drainage and the venous return also go to the same area.¹⁴⁵

In another verse, we read that the semen is composed of secretions from different glands. In Verse 76:2, we read:

إنا خلقنا الإنسان من نطفة أمشاج نبتليه فجعلناه سميعا بصيرا. (الإنسان 2).

Verily, it is We who have created man out of a drop of sperm

intermingled, so that We might try him [in his later life]: and therefore

We made him a being endowed with hearing and sight. (Al-Insan 2)

The Arabic words 'نطفة أمشاج' means a small quantity of mingled liquids. The semen, which contains the sperm, does not consist of sperm alone. On the contrary, it is made up of a mixture of different fluids. Seminal fluid is a collection of substances secreted from the testicles, the seminal vesicles, the prostate gland and glands linked to the urinary tract.

¹⁴⁵ Naik, Z. - *The Qur'an and Modern Science - Compatible or Incompatible*, p. 50.

On this, Harun Yahya writes:

"When the sperm begins its journey, the prostate gland secretes a fluid and immediately afterwards another fluid comes from the seminal vesicles; they join the sperm and semen is produced. All together they travel towards the mother's body. As we described earlier in detail, the function of these fluids is to have the nourishment ready to provide the energy that the sperm need, and particularly to neutralize the acids at the entrance to the mother's uterus, making an environment in which the sperm can move more easily.

*The whole of this fluid which is ejected from the male body for the process of fertilization is called semen. 10% of it comes from the sperm canals, 60% from the seminal vesicles, 30% from the prostate gland and the rest is sperm cells and a small quantity of fluids from other secretory glands. That is, what we call semen is a complex combination of fructose, phosphorylcholine, ergothioneine, ascorbic acid, flavins, prostaglandins, citric acid, cholesterol, zinc, acid phosphatase, lactic acid, fibrinolytic and proteolytic enzymes, hyaluronidase and sperm. We have before our eyes a wonder that God has revealed in the Qur'an."*¹⁴⁶

11.2 Sex Determination:

What determines the sex of a fetus? Science shows that the sex of a fetus is determined by the nature of the sperm and not of the ovum. The sex of the child, whether female or male, depends on whether the 23rd pair of chromosomes is XX or XY respectively.

Primarily, sex determination occurs at fertilization and depends upon the type of sex chromosome in the sperm that fertilizes an ovum. If it is an 'X' bearing sperm that fertilizes the ovum, the fetus is a female and if it is a 'Y' bearing sperm then the fetus is a male.

Nettie Stevens and Edmund Beecher Wilson are credited with discovering, in 1905, the chromosomal XY sex-determination system described above. Amazingly, the Qur'an contains several verses that state these exact facts:

Verses 53:45-46,

¹⁴⁶ Yahya, H. (2003) - *The Miracle of Human Creation*, Goodword Books, p37.

وأنه خلق الزوجين الذكر والأنثى (45) من نطفة إذا تمنى (46). (النجم 45-46).
 45. *and that it is He who creates the two kinds - the male and the female*
 46. *out of a [mere] drop of sperm as it is poured forth, (An-Najm 45-46).*

In Verse 53:46 above, we see the Arabic word 'نطفة' which means 'sperm'. So, the verses tell us that from the sperm comes the two genders: the male and the female.

And Verses 75:37-39.

ألم يك نطفة من مني يمني (37) ثم كان علقة فخلق فسوى (38) فجعل منه الزوجين الذكر والأنثى (39).
 (القيامة 37-39).

37. *Was he not once a [mere] drop of sperm that had been spilt,*
 38. *and thereafter became a germ-cell - whereupon He created and formed [it] in accordance with what [it] was meant to be,*
 39. *and fashioned out of it the two sexes, the male and the female? (Al-Qiyama 37-39).*

Here again the above verses tell us that it all starts with the semen that contains millions of sperms. We now know that one sperm only penetrate the ovum and fertilize it. This sperm determines whether the fetus becomes a male or a female.

11.3 Embryology Stages:

The credit for the development of modern embryology in the late 1950s is generally given to Karl Ernst von Baer and Heinz Christian Pander. Using ultrasound technology for uterine scanning, they were able to explain how the embryo developed in progressive steps.

Amazingly, although the Qur'an is not a science book, it contains precise description to the stages of the embryo development in the womb. This is a clear InfoMiracle in the Qur'an that preceded science discovery by more than 1,200 years. We find the verses that describe embryo development in three different Surahs: 23:12-14, 22:5, and 40:67.

Verses 23:12-14,

ولقد خلقنا الإنسان من سلالة من طين (12) ثم جعلناه نطفة في قرار مكين (13) ثم خلقنا النطفة علقة فخلقنا العلقة مضغة فخلقنا المضغة عظاما فكسونا العظام لحما ثم أنشأناه خلقا آخر فتبارك الله أحسن الخالقين (14). (المؤمنون 12-14).

12. NOW, INDEED, We create man out of the essence of clay,
 13. and then We cause him to remain as a drop of sperm in [the wombs] firm keeping,
 14. and then We create out of the drop of sperm a germ-cell, and then We create out of the germ-cell an embryonic lump, and then We create within the embryonic lump bones, and then We clothe the bones with flesh - and then We bring [all] this into being as a new creation: hallowed, therefore, is God, the best of artisans! (Al-Mu'minun 12-14).

In these verses Allah states that the origin of man is from 'طين' or 'clay'. His creation started from 'نطفة' 'nutfah' which is a small quantity of semen that is placed in a place of rest, firmly fixed (well established or lodged) for which the Arabic words 'قرار مكين' is used which mean 'a firm protected place.' The uterus is well protected from the posterior by the spinal column supported firmly by the back muscles. The embryo is further protected by the amniotic sac containing the amniotic fluid. Thus the fetus has a well-protected dwelling place.¹⁴⁷

This small quantity of fluid is then made into 'علقة' 'alaqah' which means something which clings. It also means a leech-like substance. Both descriptions are scientifically acceptable as in the very early stages the fetus clings to the wall and also appears to resemble the leech in shape. It also behaves like a leech (blood sucker) and acquires its blood supply from the mother through the placenta.

The third meaning of the word *alaqah* is a blood clot. During this *alaqah* stage, which spans the third and fourth week of pregnancy, the blood clots within closed vessels. Hence the embryo acquires the appearance of a blood clot in addition to acquiring the appearance of a leech.

¹⁴⁷ Naik, Z. - *The Qur'an and Modern Science - Compatible or Incompatible*, p. 55.

The *alaqah* is next transformed into 'مضغّة' '*mudghah*' which means 'something that is chewed (having teeth marks)' and also something that is tacky and small which can be put in the mouth and chewed like gum.

This *mudghah* is next transformed into bones (*izâm*). The bones are clothed with intact flesh or muscles (*lahm*). Then Allah makes it into another creature.

The first 11 verses that precede the verses above describe the qualities of the believers who will eventually enter the paradise. The above verses tell us that the origin and creation stages of any human, a believer or an unbeliever, are the same. They are all created in complete forms with comparable mental and cognitive capabilities to think and choose. So, these verses remind man of his humble origin, of his miraculous creation, and that he has the choice to be one of the believers whom their qualities are described in the preceding verses.

Verse 22:5,

يا أيها الناس إن كنتم في ريب من البعث فإننا خلقناكم من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم من علقة ثم من مضغّة مخلقة وغير مخلقة لنبين لكم ونقر في الأرحام ما نشاء إلى أجل مسمى ثم نخرجكم طفلاً ثم لتبلغوا أشدكم ومنكم من يتوفى ومنكم من يرد إلى أرذل العمر لكيلا يعلم من بعد علم شيئا وترى الأرض هامدة فإذا أنزلنا عليها الماء اهتزت وربت وأنبتت من كل زوج بهيج. (الحج 5).

O MEN! If you are in doubt as to the [truth of] resurrection, [remember that,] verily, We have created [every one of] you out of dust [soil], then out of a drop of sperm, then out of a germ-cell, then out of an embryonic lump complete [in itself] and yet incomplete so that We might make [your origin] clear unto you. And whatever We will [to be born] We cause to rest in the [mothers'] wombs for a term set [by Us], and then We bring you forth as infants and [allow you to live] so that [some of] you might attain to maturity: for among you are such as are caused to die [in childhood], just as many a one of you is reduced in old age to a most abject state, ceasing to know anything of what he once knew so well. And [if, O man, thou art still in doubt as to resurrection, consider this:] thou canst see the earth dry and lifeless - and [suddenly,] when We send down waters upon it, it stirs and swells and puts forth every kind of lovely plant! (Al-Hajj 5).

The above verse is composed of several parts. It opens by stating the purpose of the verse. It is to demonstrate that resurrection in the Day of Resurrection is easier than original creation.

The verse then goes on to describe the different stages of creation in the womb. Man's origin is from soil. Creation then starts with 'nutfah' a small amount of sperm, then it becomes 'alaqah', then it becomes 'mudghah'. The above verse describes the 'mudghah' or the 'embryonic lump' phase as 'مضغة مخلقة وغير مخلقة' which means 'partly formed and partly unformed'. At this stage, there are some cells which are differentiated and there are some cells that are undifferentiated – some organs are formed and yet others unformed. Then, a full infant is born who may grow until he/she reaches very old age, or he/she may die any time in between. In the last part, the verse gives an analogy to the resurrection process by a soil that, when irrigated with water, will put forth every kind of lovely plants.

The above verse outlines a path to belief. First, it contains in InfoMiracle in describing the embryo development. It then tries to convince the doubters in resurrection that the resurrection process is easier than initial creation.

And Verses 40:67-68.

هو الذي خلقكم من تراب ثم من نطفة ثم من علقه ثم يخرجكم طفلا ثم لتبلغوا أشدكم ثم لتكونوا شيوخا ومنكم من يتوفى من قبل ولتبلغوا أجلا مسمى ولعلكم تعقلون (67) هو الذي يحيي ويميت فإذا قضى أمرا فإنما يقول له كن فيكون (68). (غافر 67-68).

67. It is He who creates you out of dust, and then out of a drop of sperm, and then out of a germ-cell; and then He brings you forth as children; and then [He ordains] that you reach maturity, and then, that you grow old - though some of you [He causes to] die earlier -: and [all this He ordains] so that you might reach a term set [by Him], and that you might [learn to] use your reason.

68. It is He who grants life and deals death; and when He wills a thing to be, He but says unto it, "Be" - and it is. (Ghafir 67-68).

The above verse should be examined in conjunction with the verses that precede it. The preceding verses describe many examples of creation on the universe scale. Then, the above verses describe the creation steps of a human as a further proof of God's creation.

11.4 Senses of Hearing and Sight:

Scientific discoveries in embryology found that the first sense to develop in a developing human embryo is hearing. The fetus can hear sounds after the 24th week. Subsequently, the sense of sight is developed, and by the 28th week, the retina becomes sensitive to light. Amazingly, in the Qur'an there are several verses that report this fact more than 1,200 years before it was discovered by science.

Verse 32:9,

ثم سواه ونفخ فيه من روحه وجعل لكم السمع والأبصار والأفئدة قليلا ما تشكرون. (السجدة 9).
and then He forms him in accordance with what he is meant to be, and breathes into him of His spirit: and [thus, O men,] He endows you with hearing, and sight, and feelings as well as minds: [yet] how seldom are you grateful! (As-Sajda 9).

Verse 76:2,

إنا خلقنا الإنسان من نطفة أمشاج نبتليه فجعلناه سميعا بصيرا. (الإنسان 2).
Verily, it is We who have created man out of a drop of sperm intermingled, so that We might try him [in his later life]: and therefore We made him a being endowed with hearing and sight. (Al-Insan 2)

And Verse 23:78.

وهو الذي أنشأ لكم السمع والأبصار والأفئدة قليلا ما تشكرون. (المؤمنون 78).
[O MEN! Pay heed to God's messages,] for it is He who has endowed you with hearing, and sight, and minds: [yet] how seldom are you grateful! (Al-Mu'minun 78).

In all these verses the sense of hearing is mentioned before sight. Thus the Qur'anic description matches perfectly with the discoveries in modern embryology.

11.5 Skin and Pain:

Skin in the fingertips and the forehead is the most sensitive parts of the body to pain. It was originally thought that pain is caused by an excessive activation of the mechanoreceptors in our skin, but it's now clear that skin has specific pain receptors, called nociceptors. Charles Scott Sherrington is

credited with discovering nociceptors in 1906. There are three types of nociceptor: thermal, mechanical, and chemical.¹⁴⁸

Thermal nociceptors detect painfully hot or cold temperatures. The most notable of these is TRPV1 (transient receptor potential cation channel subfamily V member 1.) This receptor detects temperatures over 43°C, but it is also triggered by capsaicin, an active component of chilli peppers. When we eat a chilli or it touches our skin, it's not surprising that we feel a burning sensation, as the very same receptors that respond to burning heat are triggered. In a similar way, the main 'cold' receptor on our skin – TRPM8 – is activated by temperatures at 20°C or cooler, but it is also activated by menthol, found in mint. If you dipped a thermometer into toothpaste, or into creams and lotions containing menthol, the reading would be room temperature, but spreading these across your skin provides a noticeable cooling sensation.

Mechanical nociceptors detect excess pressure, crushing or mechanical deformation. or cutting of the skin. They also respond to incisions that break the skin surface.

Chemical nociceptors have TRP channels (transient receptor potential channels) that respond to a wide variety of spices. The one that sees the most response and is very widely tested is capsaicin.

Amazingly, there is a verse in the Qur'an that identify the skin as the part of the body most sensitive to pain. It is Verse 4:56:

إن الذين كفروا بآياتنا سوف نصليهم نارا كلما نضجت جلودهم بدلناهم جلودا غيرها ليذوقوا العذاب إن الله كان عزيزا حكيما. (النساء 56).

for, verily, those who are bent on denying the truth of Our messages We shall, in time, cause to endure fire: [and] every time their skins are burnt off, We shall replace them with new skins, so that they may taste suffering [in full] Verily, God is almighty, wise. (An-Nisa 56).

¹⁴⁸ Layman, M. (2019) - *The Remarkable Life of the Skin; an Intimate Journey*, Bantam Press, pp 124-125.

The above verse tells us that to make the unbelievers suffer continuous pain, every time their skin (the part that feels pain the most) is burnt, it is replaced with a new skin. This is a fearful punishment. Man, on the other hand, has the freedom to choose the other fate which is described in the following verse, Verse 4:57:

والذين آمنوا وعملوا الصالحات سندخلهم جنات تجري من تحتها الأنهار خالدين فيها أبدا لهم فيها أزواج مطهرة وندخلهم ظلا ظليلا. (النساء 57).

But those who attain to faith and do righteous deeds We shall bring into gardens through which running waters flow, therein to abide beyond the count of time; there shall they have spouses pure: and [thus] We shall bring them unto happiness abounding. (An-Nisa 57).

In opposition to this ever-burning fire, with ever-burning skins, we have a full picture of the perfect reward granted to those who believe in God and translate this belief into action. These are placed in “gardens through which running waters flow”. It is a reward given them forever, to emphasize the elements of settlement and continuity: “Where they shall abide beyond the count of time.” In addition, they have what re-emphasizes all these elements and what imparts a feeling of total happiness in eternal bliss: “There they shall have pure spouses.” They also find a cool shade to add an air of ease and freshness to the scene of perfect bliss.

Thus we have the perfect contrast of reward and punishment, provided by contrasting scenes and images. This is typical of the Qur’anic method in its portrayal of highly effective and powerful scenes from the Day of Judgement.

11.6 Natural Breastfeeding:

Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It provides the infants the best nutrition, and protection from diseases. The World Health Organization (WHO) says the following about Breastfeeding in its website:

“Breastfeeding is one of the most effective ways to ensure child health and survival...”

Breastmilk is the ideal food for infants. It is safe, clean and contains antibodies which help protect against many common childhood illnesses. Breastmilk provides all the energy and nutrients that the infant needs for the first months of life, and it continues to provide up to half or more of a child's nutritional needs during the second half of the first year, and up to one third during the second year of life.

Breastfed children perform better on intelligence tests, are less likely to be overweight or obese and less prone to diabetes later in life. Women who breastfeed also have a reduced risk of breast and ovarian cancers."

To gain the most benefits from breastfeeding, however, it should be provided exclusively, and must continue for a sufficient length of duration. A recent study writes the following about breastfeeding¹⁴⁹:

"Breast milk has evolved to provide the best nutrition, immune protection, and regulation of growth, development, and metabolism for the human infant. Breast milk is critical in compensating for developmental delays in immune function in the neonate and is responsible for reducing permeability of the intestine to prepare it for extrauterine life

...

The associations between breastfeeding behaviors and infant health outcomes are the subject of a large literature that, despite limitations, establishes breastfeeding as the "gold standard" against which alternative feeds should be evaluated

...

Infants who are not breastfed, or who are breastfed for short periods or at low intensity, have a higher risk of infection and illness than those who are breastfed optimally.

...

¹⁴⁹ Dieterich, C.M. et al, "Breastfeeding and Health Outcomes for the Mother-Infant Dyad", in Morrow, A.L. & C.J. Chantry (Eds.) (2013) - *Breastfeeding Updates for the Pediatrician*, pp 34-36.

Bachrach and colleagues found that breastfed infants had a 72% lower risk of hospitalization for respiratory infections. In addition, investigators of a subsequent prospective cohort in the Netherlands found evidence to support a protective role for breastfeeding against GI and upper- and lower-respiratory tract infections. In the Netherlands cohort, only infants who were breastfed for at least 6 months had lower risk for GI and respiratory-tract infections than controls who were not breastfed. Moreover, the protective effects of breastfeeding persisted after cessation, although they diminished over time.

...

In addition to sufficient breastfeeding duration, it is important to provide breast milk exclusively to reduce the risk of infection and illness because this behavior reduces the infant's exposure to illness-causing agents."

Amazingly, we find in the Qur'an several verses that give the exact recommendations about breastfeeding as to those published in the modern scientific research. These verses are: 2:233, 31:14, and 46:15.

Verse 2:233,

*والوالدات يرضعن أولادهن حولين كاملين لمن أراد أن يتم الرضاعة... (البقرة 233).
And the mothers may nurse their children for two whole years, if they wish to complete the period of nursing; ... (Al-Baqara 233).*

The above verse sets the upper limit for the duration of breastfeeding to be two whole years.

Verse 31:14,

ووصينا الإنسان بوالديه حملته أمه وهنا على وهن وفصاله في عامين أن اشكر لي ولوالديك إلي المصير. (لقمان 14).

*And [God says:] 'We have enjoined upon man goodness towards his parents: his mother bore him by bearing strain upon strain, and his **utter dependence on her lasted two years**: [hence, O man,] be grateful towards Me and towards thy parents, [and remember that] with Me is all journeys' end. (Luqman 14).*

The above verse contains several parts. In the third part, we see the sentence 'وفصاله في عامين' which again sets the upper limit for the duration of breastfeeding to be two whole years.

Verse 46:15.

ووصينا الإنسان بوالديه إحسانا حملته أمه كرها ووضعته كرها وحمله وفصاله ثلاثون شهرا...
(الأحقاف 15).

NOW [among the best of the deeds which] We have enjoined upon man is goodness towards his parents. In pain did his mother bear him, and in pain did she give him birth; and her bearing him and his utter dependence on her took thirty months... (Al-Ahqaf 15).

The above verse tells us that the total period of pregnancy and breastfeeding should be around 30 months. Since pregnancy usually lasts for 9 months, the optimum duration of breastfeeding should be around 21 months.

Thus, all the above verses encourage natural breastfeeding and recommend its duration to be between 21-24 months.

12- Plants, Animals and Insects

The verses in the Qur'an that discuss God's creation are not restricted to the cosmos and to humans only, there are many verses that manifest God's creation in plants, animals, birds, fish, and insects. In all of these verses, one finds calls to man to think, ponder, and contemplate. What man reads or sees are evidence upon evidence to the existence of God, the Creator.

In this chapter, several verses that describe different aspects in the creation of plants, animals, and insects are reviewed and examined.

12.1 *Plants for Food:*

In the Qur'an we find a complete list of the plants that are the source of food for humans and animals. In Verses 80:24-32, we read the following:

فليُنظر الإنسان إلى طعامه (24) أنا صببنا الماء صبا (25) ثم شققنا الأرض شقا (26) فأنبتنا فيها حبا (27) وعنبا وقضبا (28) وزيتونا ونخلا (29) وحدائق غلبا (30) وفاكهة وأبا (31) متاعا لكم ولأنعامكم (32) (عبس 24-32).

24. *Let man, then, consider [the sources of] his food:*
25. *[how it is] that We pour down water, pouring it down abundantly;*
26. *and then We cleave the earth [with new growth], cleaving it asunder,*
27. *and thereupon We cause grain to grow out of it,*
28. *and vines and edible plants,*
29. *and olive trees and date-palms,*
30. *and gardens dense with foliage,*
31. *and fruits and herbage,*
32. *for you and for your animals to enjoy. (Abasa 24-32)*

Plants for food are generally grouped into the following¹⁵⁰:

- i. Cereal plants: wheat, rice, maize, barley, sorghum, millet, oats, rye.

¹⁵⁰ Ingrouille, M. & B. Eddie (2006) - *Plants; Evolution and Diversity*, Cambridge Univ. Press, pp 321-332.

- ii. Pulses food: soybeans, beans, groundnuts, peas, lentils.
- iii. Oilseed crops: soybeans, rapeseed, mustards, sunflower, safflower, oil palm, olives, sesame seed, linseed, castor beans, ...
- iv. Root crops: potatoes, cassava, sweet potatoes, yams.
- v. Vegetables: tomatoes, chillies, green peppers, eggplants, onions, garlic, leeks, cabbages, cauliflower, cucumber, gherkins, pumpkins, squash, lettuce, artichokes, asparagus, carrots, okra, spinach.
- vi. Fruits and nuts: apples, pears, quince, plums, peaches, apricots, cherries, almond, strawberries, raspberries, coconuts, dates, bananas, grapes, citrus fruits, mangoes, cashew nut, pistachio, melons, cantaloupes, pineapples, walnut, hazelnuts, figs, avocados, papayas, chestnuts, blueberries, kiwi fruit.
- vii. Sugar crops: sugar-cane, beet.

The above verses mention the following plants that are sources of food:

- 'حبا' or 'grains' which include 'cereal plants' and 'pulse food.'
- 'عنباً' or 'grapes' which is a fruit and a source of sugar.
- 'قصباً' or 'cane, reed' which include 'sugar cane', vegetables and edible plants.
- 'زيتونا' or 'olives' which is an oilseed crops.
- 'نخلاً' or 'palm trees' which is a fruit and an oilseed crops.
- 'حدائق غلبا' or 'dense gardens' which contain flowers that are oilseed crops.
- 'فاكهة' or 'fruits' of all kinds.
- 'أباً' which is vegetables and root crops of all kinds.

It is amazing that the above 9 verses are composed of 26 words only. In these few words, the Qur'an presented the whole range of plants that are sources of food for humans and animals.

12.2 The Olive:

Olive is a the fruit of the olive tree and the source of olive oil. Olives and olive oil are integral parts of the cultural and culinary heritage of the Mediterranean countries. Olives are excellent source of Vitamin E, Sodium,

Calcium, Potassium, Magnesium and Iron. Recent scientific studies have shown that olive oil have the following benefits¹⁵¹:

- It is rich of fatty acids that lower LDL (low-density lipoproteins, or bad cholesterol) and maintain HDL (high-density lipoproteins, or good cholesterol.)
- It is a good alternative in the treatment of diabetes mellitus; it can also prevent or slow down the onset of the disease. It prevents insulin resistance and its possible harmful consequences.
- It can be reused for frying without its fatty acids undergoing hydrogenation processes that cancel out its beneficial effects.
- The powerful antioxidant properties of olive polyphenols can also protect against oxidative stress and chronic inflammation, a key initiating factor of heart disease.
- They improve blood circulation. It ensures better control of glucose in the blood and lowers blood pressure.
- It reduces chronic inflammations.
- It reduces risk of some cancers.

Amazingly, the Qur'an acclaims the olive and the olive tree in several verses, and considers the olive tree a blessed plant. Here are the verses that mention the olive.

Verse 6:99,

وهو الذي أنزل من السماء ماء فأخرجنا به نبات كل شيء فأخرجنا منه خضرا نخرج منه حبا متراكبا ومن النخل من طلعها قنوان دانية وجنات من أعناب والزيتون والرمان مشتبها وغير متشابه انظروا إلى ثمره إذا أثمر وينعه إن في ذلكم لآيات لقوم يؤمنون. (الأنعام 99).

*And He it is who has caused waters to come down from the sky; and by this means have We brought forth all living growth, and out of this have We brought forth verdure. Out of this do We bring forth close-growing grain; and out of the spathe of the palm tree, dates in thick clusters; and gardens of vines, and the **olive tree**, and the pomegranate: [all] so alike, and yet so different! Behold their fruit when it comes to fruition and ripens! Verily, in all this there are messages indeed for people who will believe! (Al-An'am 99).*

¹⁵¹ Aparicio, R. & J. Harwood (Eds.) (2013) - Handbook of Olive Oil. Analysis and Properties, 2e, Springer, Ch. 18.

Verse 6:141,

وهو الذي أنشأ جنات معروشات وغير معروشات والنخل والزرع مختلفا أكله والزيتون والرمان متشابها وغير متشابهة كلوا من ثمره إذا أثمر وآتوا حقه يوم حصاده ولا تسرفوا إنه لا يحب المسرفين. (الأنعام 141).

*For it is He who has brought into being gardens-[both] the cultivated ones and those growing wild -and the date-palm, and fields bearing multiform produce, and the **olive tree**, and the pomegranate: [all] resembling one another and yet so different! Eat of their fruit when it comes to fruition, and give [unto the poor] their due on harvest day. And do not waste [God's bounties]: verily, He does not love the wasteful! (Al-An'am 141).*

Verse 16:11,

ينبت لكم به الزرع والزيتون والنخيل والأعناب ومن كل الثمرات إن في ذلك لآية لقوم يتفكرون. (النحل 11).

[and] by virtue thereof He causes crops to grow for you, and olive trees, and date palms, and grapes, and all [other] kinds of fruit: in this, behold, there is a message indeed for people who think! (An-Nahl 11).

Verse 80:29,

وزيتونا ونخلا. (عبس 29).

and olive trees and date-palms, (Abasa 29).

Verse 95:1,

والتين والزيتون. (التين 1).

By the fig, and the olive, (At-Tin 1)¹⁵².

Verses 23:20,

وشجرة تخرج من طور سيناء تنبت بالدهن وصيغ للأكليين. (المؤمنون 20).

as well as a tree that issues from [the lands adjoining] Mount Sinai, yielding oil and relish for all to eat. (Al-Mu'minun 20).

¹⁵² Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an.

The above verse does not mention the olive tree by name; it refers to it as a tree that springs forth from Mount Sinai. This is an indication that it is a blessed tree for it has its roots in a blessed place.

And Verse 24:35.

الله نور السماوات والأرض مثل نوره كمشكاة فيها مصباح المصباح في زجاجة الزجاج كأنها كوكب دري يوقد من شجرة مباركة زيتونة لا شرقية ولا غربية يكاد زيتها يضيء ولو لم تمسسه نار نور على نور يهدي الله لنوره من يشاء ويضرب الله الأمثال للناس والله بكل شيء عليم. (النور 35).

God is the Light of the heavens and the earth. The parable of His light is, as it were, that of a niche containing a lamp; the lamp is [enclosed] in glass, the glass [shining] like a radiant star: [a lamp] lit from a blessed tree - an olive-tree that is neither of the east nor of the west the oil whereof [is so bright that it] would well-nigh give light [of itself] even though fire had not touched it: light upon light! God guides unto His light him that wills [to be guided]; and [to this end] God propounds parables unto men, since God [alone] has full knowledge of all things. (An-Nur 35).

The above verse is the famous 'The Nur Verse' or the 'The Verse of the Light.' It is the verse that describes God as the Light of the heavens and the earth. It is the ultimate praise for the blessed olive tree to be mentioned in this verse as the source of the fuel to the lamp that lights the heavens and the earth.

Commenting on the above verse, Qutb writes the following:

"The verse begins by stating the fact that 'God is the light of the heavens and the earth,' but then it brings us fast from this great expanse to a niche, a small artificial wall recess in which a lamp is placed so as to focus its light and make it shine. 'His light may be compared to a niche containing a lamp.' It adds one element of strength and concentration after another: 'The lamp within a glass,' which protects it from the wind and purifies its light to make it stronger and more radiant: 'The glass like a radiant star.' We see the glass painted here as bright, transparent, almost shining. At this point the verse links the example and the reality, the likeness and the original, the small glass and the radiant star. Thus we do not concentrate our reflection on the miniscule picture which is presented only to help us understand the great reality.

*The Surah immediately reverts to the small example of the lamp, which is 'lit from a blessed tree – an olive tree...' The purest light known to the first people addressed by the Qur'an was that of olive oil. But this is not the only reason for choosing this example. It is an example that has connotations of sacredness associated with the blessed tree. These connotations recall the image of the sacred valley, the nearest place to Arabia in which olive trees grow in abundance. The Qur'an refers to this tree and gives it special significance: 'We bring forth... a tree that grows on Mount Sinai yielding oil and relish for all to eat.' (23:19-20) It is a tree that lives for ages, and it brings endless benefits to man through its oil, wood, leaves and fruit. Once again the text turns from the little example to remind us of the great reality. This tree is not a particular one, and it does not belong to a particular place or direction. It is merely an example given to make the reality easier to understand. Hence, it is described as 'neither of the east nor of the west.' Moreover, its oil is not the one we see and know. It is different and far more remarkable: 'Its very oil would almost give light even though no fire had touched it.' It is so transparent and bright that it almost gives light without burning. The example concludes with another remarkable statement: 'Light upon light.' Thus, we are back with the original light that bears no comparison.'*¹⁵³

12.3 The Date Palm:

Fossil records show that the date palm has existed for at least 50 million years. Dates have been a staple food of the Middle East and the Indus Valley for thousands of years.

Date palm has many benefits as a medicine, and its waste has many useful environmental applications. A recent publication has this to say about date palm¹⁵⁴:

"The date palm is one of the oldest cultivated trees, and its fruit has been a dietary staple around the world for many centuries. The fruit is used for food, environmental, and medical applications.

¹⁵³ Qutb, S - *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an (In the Shadows of the Al-Qur'an)*, Vol. 12, p 254.

¹⁵⁴ Naushad, M. & E. Lichtfouse (Eds.) (2019) - *Sustainable Agriculture Reviews 34. Date Palm for Food, Medicine and the Environment*, Springer, pp v-vi.

Date pulps contain dietary fibers and easily digestible sugars (70%) including glucose, sucrose, and fructose. Pulps also contain vitamins such as biotin, thiamine, riboflavin, and ascorbic and folic acid and are also rich in iron, cobalt, calcium, copper, potassium, magnesium, fluorine, manganese, phosphorus, sulfur, boron, sodium, copper, selenium, and zinc. Consumption of 100 g of dates supplies more than 15% of the recommended daily allowance for copper, selenium, magnesium, and potassium.

Moreover, date fruits have phenolic compounds and flavonoid constituents with free radical scavenging and antioxidant activities. The date palm fruit has been used in traditional medicines for the cure of various contagious diseases. Thus, regular use of dates provides protection from prostate, endometrial, colon, lung, breast, and pancreatic cancers.

Date palm wastes are efficient adsorbents owing to cost-effective and adsorption potential for the exclusion of various contaminants. Date stones and date palm leaves are a freely and abundantly available biomass. Therefore, the transformation of date biomass waste into activated carbon can be useful for drinking water purification, wastewater treatment, and removal of dyes, pesticides, phenols, and toxic metal ions."

In the Qur'an, dates and date palms are honored as one of the blessings of Paradise. Dates and date palms are mentioned and praised in Verses 6:99, 6:141, 19:23-26, 26:148, 50:10, 55:11, 55:68, and 80:29. Here are a few examples of these verses.

Verse 6:141,

وهو الذي أنشأ جنات معروشات وغير معروشات والنخل والزرع مختلفا أكله ... (الأنعام 141).

*For it is He who has brought into being gardens-[both] the cultivated ones and those growing wild -and the **date-palm**, and fields bearing multiform produce, ... (Al-An'am 141).*

Verses 50:9-11,

ونزلنا من السماء ماء مباركا فأنبتنا به جنات وحب الحصيد. والنخل باسقات لها طلع نضيد. رزقا للعباد وأحيينا به بلدة ميتا كذلك الخروج. (ق 9-11)

*And We send down from the skies water rich in blessings, and cause thereby gardens to grow, and fields of grain, and tall **palm-trees** with their thickly-clustered dates, as sustenance apportioned to men; and by [all] this We bring dead land to life: [and] even so will be [man's] coming-forth from death. (Qaf 9-11).*

Verse 55:68.

فيهما فاكهة ونخل ورمان. (الرحمن 68).

*In both of [the two paradises] will be [all kinds of] fruit, and **date-palms** and pomegranates. (Ar-Rahman 68).*

And Verse 19:23-26.

فأجاءها المخاض إلى جذع النخلة قالت يا ليتني مت قبل هذا وكنت نسيا منسيا (23) فنادها من تحتها ألا تحزني قد جعل ربك تحتك سريا (24) وهزي إليك بجذع النخلة تساقط عليك رطبا جنيا (25) فكلي واشربي وقري عينا فإما ترين من البشر أحدا فقولي إني نذرت للرحمن صوما فلن أكلم اليوم إنسيا (26). (مريم 23-26).

23. And [when] the throes of childbirth drove her [Mary] to the trunk of a palm-tree, she exclaimed: "Oh, would that I had died ere this, and had become a thing forgotten, utterly forgotten!"

24. Thereupon [a voice] called out to her from beneath that [palm-tree]: "Grieve not! Thy Sustainer has provided a rivulet [running] beneath thee;

25. and shake the trunk of the palm-tree towards thee: it will drop fresh, ripe dates upon thee.

26. Eat, then, and drink, and let thine eye be gladdened! And if thou shouldst see any human being, convey this unto him: 'Behold, abstinence from speech have I vowed unto the Most Gracious; hence, I may not speak today to any mortal. (Maryam 23-26).

The above four verses tell the story of Mary when she was about to deliver her child, Jesus. In the midst of labor and childbirth she is driven to lean against the trunk of a palm tree. The palm tree here is a witness to the miraculous childbirth of a great prophet. Another miracle follows; the child born this very moment crying out to his mother, comforting her and reaffirming her bond with her Lord, directing her as to how to obtain food and drink. A third miracle follows; she only needs to shake the palm tree and "it will drop you fresh ripe dates."

12.4 Animals and Birds Live in Communities

Human beings are not the only residents of this universe, so as to consider that they come into existence by sheer coincidence, or that human life is meaningless. There are numerous creatures in the world and they all have

their lives regulated in a way that indicates careful planning and elaborate design. Moreover, they all confirm the oneness of the Creator and the consistency of His law of creation.

In the Qur'an, there is one short verse that summarizes important concepts in animal behavior and ethology. It is Verse 6:38.

وما من دابة في الأرض ولا طائر يطير بجناحيه إلا أمم أمثالكم ما فرطنا في الكتاب من شيء ثم إلى ربهم يحشرون. (الأنعام 38).

There is not a moving (living) creature on earth, nor a bird that flies with its two wings, but are communities like you. We have neglected nothing in the Book, then unto their Lord they (all) shall be gathered.
(Al-An'am 38)¹⁵⁵

The above verse tells us that all animals that walk on earth, be they insects, reptiles, or vertebrates and all flying creatures, including every winged insect or bird, and indeed every living creature, belong to a community which shares certain characteristics and a particular way of life, just as human beings do. God has not left any type of His creation without providing it with an elaborate plan to organize its existence and without taking account of what it does with its life¹⁵⁶.

The study of animals and their behavior is as old as man himself. This activity as a branch of science, however, only matured after world war II. Scientific research in zoology, animal behavior, and ethology in the last fifty years has indeed confirmed that animals, birds and fish live in communities, i.e. they organize, and live and work together^{157,158}.

In the following sections, some examples are given to the lives of animals and insects in communities.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Hilali, M.D. & M.M. Khan (1997) - *Translation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an*.

¹⁵⁶ Qutb, S - *Fi Zilal Al-Qur'an (In the Shadows of the Al-Qur'an)*, Vol. 5, pp 106-107.

¹⁵⁷ See for example: Miller, S.A. & J.P. Harley (2016) - *Zoology*, 10e, McGraw-Hill.

¹⁵⁸ Allman, T. (2009) - *Animal Behavior. Animal Life in Groups*, Chelsea House Pub.

12.5 *Flight of Birds*

Among the wonders that testify to God's limitless power and His control of everything in the universe is one that we see every day without giving it much thought. This is the ability of birds to fly. Because it is so familiar to us to see birds flying in midair, we do not pay attention to the fascinating wonder their flying involves. Our minds do not give it much thought unless we are fully alerted to it.

Scientific analysis to the mechanism of bird's flight revealed that it is a very complex mechanism. It involves many factors and variables related to the bird's body mass (all-up mass, mass of crop contents, fat fraction, airframe fraction, mass of fat that is consumed as fuel, mass of flight muscles, mass of airframe), and wing measurements (wing span, wing chord, mean chord, aspect ratio, wing area, and tail area.) The variables related to flight environment include: height above sea level, air pressure, air density, air temperature, air temperature lapse rate, and air kinematic viscosity. In addition to all of that, we have more factors and variables related to gravity, wind and weather¹⁵⁹.

Man has been trying for ages to imitate the flight of birds. The Ornithopter is an aircraft that flies by flapping its wings. A man-powered ornithopter is a one that is powered by the muscular effort of its pilot. On August 2, 2010, Todd Reichert piloted a human-powered ornithopter named Snowbird. The 32-metre (105 ft) wingspan, 42-kilogram aircraft was constructed from carbon fiber, balsa, and foam. The pilot sat in a small cockpit suspended below the wings and pumped a bar with his feet to operate a system of wires that flapped the wings up and down. Towed by a car until airborne, it then sustained flight for almost 20 seconds. It flew 145 meters with an average speed of 25.6 km/h¹⁶⁰.

It is incredible how birds are able to fly with ease. During migratory flights, birds fly for long hours in different environmental conditions, and they cover thousands of kilometers.

¹⁵⁹ Pennycuick, C.J. (2007) - *Modelling the Flying Bird*, AP.

¹⁶⁰ <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ornithopter>

In the Qur'an, we find a verse, Verse 16:79, that reminds us that it is God's laws of nature, which make the birds able to fly and make the atmosphere around us amenable for their flight. It is His laws that keep the birds in mid-air, floating safely, without fear that they may fall.

ألم يروا إلى الطير مسخرات في جو السماء ما يمسكهن إلا الله إن في ذلك لآيات لقوم يؤمنون. (النحل 79).

"Have, then, they [who deny the truth] never considered the birds, enabled [by God] to fly in mid-air, with none but God holding them aloft? In this, behold, there are messages indeed for people who will believe!" (An-Nahl 79).

This fact about birds' flight is emphasized in another verse, Verse 67:19:

أولم يروا إلى الطير فوقهم صافات ويقبضن ما يمسكهن إلا الرحمن إنه بكل شيء بصير. (المالك 19)

"Have they, then, never beheld the birds above them, spreading their wings and drawing them in? None but the Most Gracious upholds them: for, verily, He keeps all things in His sight." (Al-Mulk 19).

In the above verse, we see the word 'يمسكهن' from the Arabic verb 'amsaka' which literally means, 'to put one's hand on, seize, hold, hold someone back,' which expresses the idea that Allah holds the bird up in His power. The bird may spread its wings or draws them in, it may glide, dive down at speed, or rise high. All these maneuvers are performed in absolute harmony and synchronization. It is God Who created the natural laws that allowed the birds to fly and perform these flight maneuvers.

Bird flight is certainly an enjoyment that invites contemplation of God's beautiful creation.

12.6 Bee and Honey:

One outstanding example of an insect that lives in an organized community is the life of the bee in the wild. This is an affirmation of Verse 6:38 that was examined in Sec. 12.4 above.

In the Qur'an, we find two verses, Verses 16:68-69, that describe the organized life of the bee community:

وأوحى ربك إلى النحل أن اتخذني من الجبال بيوتا ومن الشجر ومما يعرشون (68) ثم كلي من كل الثمرات فاسلكي سبل ربك ذللا يخرج من بطونها شراب مختلف ألوانه فيه شفاء للناس إن في ذلك لآية لقوم يتفكرون (69). (النحل 68-69).

68. And [consider how] thy Sustainer has inspired the bee: "Prepare for thyself dwellings in mountains and in trees, and in what [men] may build [for thee by way of hives];

69. and then eat of all manner of fruit, and follow humbly the paths ordained for thee by thy Sustainer." [And lo!] there issues from within these [bees] a fluid of many hues, wherein there is health for man. In all this, behold, there is a message indeed for people who think! (An-Nahl 68-69).

In Arabic, there is a distinction between an order given to a male subject, or an order given to a female subject. For example the verb 'to eat', if you order a male to eat, you say: 'كل' 'kul.' If you order a female to eat, you say: 'كلي' 'kuli.'

In the above verses we find several orders that are given to female subjects: 'اتخذني', 'كلي', and 'فاسلكي'. These all indicate that the bee community is controlled and dominated by the females. It is ruled by a queen, and it is the female bee that leaves its home, gathers food, and makes honey.

In Shakespeare's play, 'Henry the Fourth', some of the characters speak about bees and mention that the bees are soldiers and that they have a king. That is what people thought in Shakespearean times. They thought that the worker bees are male bees and they go home and are answerable to a king bee. This, however, is not true. The worker bees are females and they do not report to a king bee but to a queen bee. These facts were reported in the Qur'an 1,400 years ago.¹⁶¹

The bee colony in the wild is an engineering marvel. It is designed for efficiency. It has a unique annual cycle where the activities of the colony are prescribed according to the season of the year. Each of the inhabitants

¹⁶¹ Naik, Z. - *The Qur'an and Modern Science - Compatible or Incompatible*, p 39.

of the colony has its function and role. The colony operates using effective communication methods.¹⁶²

Von-Frisch received the Nobel Prize in 1973 for his research on the behavior and communication of the bees. The bee, after discovering any new garden or flower, goes back and tells its fellow bees the exact direction and map to get there, which is known as 'bee dance'. The meanings of this insect's movements that are intended to transmit information between worker bees have been discovered scientifically using photography and other methods. The Qur'an mentions in the above verses how the bee with its skill, finds the spacious paths of its Lord.

The bee assimilates juices of various kinds of flowers and fruit and forms honey within its body, which it stores in its cells of wax. Only a couple of centuries ago humans came to know that honey comes from the belly of the bee.

But this fact was mentioned in the Qur'an 1,400 years ago in Verse 16:69 above. This verse tells us also that honey is a medicine that cures many diseases; a fact that was only confirmed by recent research. Here is a list of the uses of honey as healer:¹⁶³

- A Bactericide: a broad-spectrum killer of Bacteria.
- As a Hydrogen Peroxide.
- As an Antioxidant.
- As a Manuka.
- Treatment of Wounds.
- Treatment of Burns.
- Treatment of Internal Disorders:
 - Cough
 - Intestinal disorders
 - Salmonella

¹⁶² See for example: Seeley, T.D. (2019) - *The Lives of Bees. The Untold Story of the Honey Bee in the Wild*, Princeton Univ. Press.

¹⁶³ See for example: Altman, N. (2010) - *The Honey Prescription; the Amazing Power of Honey as Medicine*, Healing Arts Press.

- Infantile Gastroenteritis
- Dyspepsia and Stomach Ulcers
- Cystic Fibrosis
- Hemorrhoids
- Yeast Infection

12.7 Lifestyle and Communication of Ants:

An ants colony is another outstanding example of an insect that lives in an organized community. This is a further affirmation of Verse 6:38 that was examined in Sec. 12.4 above.

In Verses 27:17-18 we read the following:

وحشر لسليمان جنوده من الجن والإنس والطير فهم يوزعون (17) حتى إذا أتوا على واد النمل قالت نملة يا أيها النمل ادخلوا مساكنكم لا يحطمنكم سليمان وجنوده وهم لا يشعرون (18). (النمل 17-18).

17. *And [one day] there were assembled before Solomon his hosts of invisible beings, and of men, and of birds; and then they were led forth in orderly ranks,*

18. *till, when they came upon a valley [full] of ants, an ant exclaimed: "O you ants! Get into your dwellings, lest Solomon and his hosts crush you without [even] being aware [of you]!" (An-Naml 17-18).*

In a previous section, Sec. 10.4, it is mentioned that the superior tools for communication, 'language', 'cognition', and 'symbolic representation', are the capabilities that distinguish humans and make them above all creatures. The above verses indicate that ants have advanced level of communication capability compared to other insects or animals. Not only ants can pass information, but they have alarm mechanism that can tell when danger is imminent to the colony. This points to an advanced level of an organized and structured ants community.

Describing the communication systems in ants, Keller & Gordon write the following:¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Keller, L. & E. Gordon (2009) - *The Lives of Ants*, Oxford Univ. Press, pp 60-61.

"Being the most social of social insects and living in a regime based on mutual assistance and task-sharing, over time ants have become real communicating machines. Like most other animals, they have achieved this through the use of a chemical language in which the 'words' are in the form of pheromones, substances detectable by smell and by taste which can be produced and recognized by all individuals. Ants are walking bundles of secretory glands (they have about forty of them, mainly in the abdomen, the head, and the legs), which enable them, depending on species, to emit between ten and twenty different pheromones, each of which has its own 'meaning'. Some of these pheromones have a marked sexual connotation, such as the ones used by virgin queens for attracting males. Some are produced by workers for recruiting their sisters or for alerting them to danger. Others are used for marking territory, for identifying members of their colony or conversely for detecting foreigners. There are also royal pheromones, which are the source of the strong attractiveness of queens for their 'court'.

... More 'modern' ants systematically use pheromones to make things move more quickly and to recruit many workers at once. On the way out, their scouts leave a chemical trail behind them so as to find their way back. If they find a source of nourishment they secrete even more pheromones on their way back, so that the other workers have a clear path to follow."

And describing the alarm system in the ant community, Keller & Gordon write the following:¹⁶⁵

"When activated by ants that have become aware of a danger threatening the colony, pheromones can also act as an alarm system which alerts nestmates. This can be easily demonstrated by disturbing wood ants: all workers present on the surface will instantly go into aggressive mode, squirting formic acid from their abdomens and becoming ready to bite any hand that might try to penetrate the nest. Some primitive ants also have recourse to this chemical language to call for help.

The communication systems of some species can actually be quite sophisticated. In the 1970s, the British entomologist John Bradshaw discovered that, when African weaver ants come upon an enemy, they can emit a mixture of

¹⁶⁵ Ibid, pp 64-65.

four pheromones. These chemicals have different rates of diffusion in air; and they enable individuals to call for assistance and to guide reinforcements towards themselves. The alarm functions in stages: on perceiving the first of the pheromones released by the individual in distress, ants will begin waving their antennae to pick up other scents; they then receive the second chemical signal and start running about in all directions looking for the source of the problem, until they pick up the third signal, which attracts them in the right direction. When they reach the destination, they perceive the fourth of the pheromones, which has the effect of making them even more aggressive."

Ants also use acoustic signals, dancing and squeaking to communicate:¹⁶⁶

"Other species use these acoustical signals to reinforce the pheromones for recruiting nestmates when they have discovered large prey or a specially tasty leaf. According to Cesare Baroni-Urbani, Elmar Schiliger, and their colleagues at the University of Basel, 'Sound production through stridulation is an important but not essential component of ant recruitment behaviour.' In a study of ants of the genus Messor, the finding of this team was that any worker on whom they had fitted a silencer (by putting wax on its stridulatory organ) still managed to recruit as many nestmates as the others; it just took longer.

This stridulation is all but inaudible to the human ear, as its intensity is very low. The Swiss team report that they have never heard their Messor making the sound in the wild but that it is clearly audible if you take an ant by the head and hold it close to your ear. Not that ants themselves actually 'hear' the sound; they pick up stridulatory vibrations through the ground in signals which only carry for a few centimeters. This is a clever way of summoning nearby workers without needlessly alerting the whole colony.

So, with their pheromones on the one hand and their stridulation on the other, ants can use signals which are effective over both long and short distances. This means they are well equipped to send and receive all the information essential to everyday life and the proper working of their colony. The constant exchanging of information is what has enabled colony members to exploit mutual assistance and

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, pp 68-69.

cooperation to the full. As a rule, successful societies have good communication systems; ant society is no exception."

13 Epilogue

The previous chapters give detailed review to the creation accounts in the Bible and in the Qur'an. It will be useful to show in this chapter direct comparisons between these accounts.

Table (13.1) below shows comparisons between the major features of the creation accounts in the Bible and the Qur'an. There are much more details discussed in the previous chapters that do not appear in the table.

Table 13.1: Creation Accounts in the Bible vs the Qur'an

	Criteria	The Bible	The Qur'an
1	Span of creation of the universe	Six 24-hour days.	Six eons or periods of time.
2	Type of creation of the universe	Miraculous.	Initial miracle, then process-based.
3	Creation of earth	Miraculous, in one 24-hour day.	Process-based.
4	Creation of life forms	Miraculous, in one 24-hour day.	Initial miracle, then process-based.
5	Creation of humans	Miraculous, in one 24-hour day.	Initial miracle, then process-based.
6	Timing of the different creations	Same time (within days of each other).	Different timings. Left to be decided by scientific discovery.
7	Order (sequence) of creation	Fixed (influenced by ancient myths & legends)	Not mentioned. Left to be decided by scientific discovery.
8	How old is the universe?	6024 years old (Creation took place in 4004 BC.)	Not mentioned. Left to be decided by scientific discovery.
9	Continuity of creation?	No. Creation ended in the sixth day.	Yes. Creation is continuing till now.
10	Creation of seven heavens.	No mention.	Yes, being continually created and populated.
11	What is Day 7?	The day in which God rested.	The day of resurrection and judgement. It is the Hereafter.
12	Existence of ante Adamic creatures	No.	Yes. Earth was populated by the <i>jinn</i> and wild creatures.

	Criteria	The Bible	The Qur'an
13	Why humans are special?	No mention.	Language & cognitive capabilities.
14	Formation of rain water	Miraculous separation of the waters	Evaporation of surface water, carried by winds to form clouds.
15	Shape of earth	Flat.	Spherical.
16	Cosmic system	Geocentric.	Heliocentric.
17	Polytheism?	Yes. Strongly hinted.	Absolute No.
18	God Attributes	Human like. He gets tired, needs rest. He talks to people and walks among them. He lies!!!	Creator. Almighty. All-Knowing. All-Wise. Omnipotent. Omniscient. Transcendent...
19	Influence of ancient myths	Strong.	Nil.
20	Bees' hive	Bees build a hive in a dead carcass.	Bees only build hive in a clean environment to produce honey that is a cure and a medicine.
21	Ants' community	Ants live alone with no guide, overseer, or ruler.	Ants live in a colony with an advanced organization and communication system.
22	The Serpent	The serpent eats dust.	No mention.

It would have been useful for the above table to show in a separate column what science says about each element in the comparison. But this information does not escape the intelligent reader.

Table (13.2) below gives a comparison between the basic elements of the Fall accounts in the Bible and the Qur'an.

Table 13.2: The Fall Accounts in the Bible vs. the Qur'an

	Criteria	The Bible	The Qur'an
1	What is the tree?	Tree of Knowledge.	Tree of Eternity.
2	Who tempted Adam and Eve?	A serpent (Satan in the form of a serpent)	Satan (Iblis).

	Criteria	The Bible	The Qur'an
3	Who is Satan?	A fallen angel.	One of the <i>jinn</i> .
4	Who ate first?	Eve.	Adam & Eve together.
5	Who is to be blamed?	Eve.	Adam.
6	Perpetuality of the sin.	Yes.	No. Adam repented and God forgave him.
7	Purpose of Fall	A punishment to Adam and Eve and to suffer hardship.	To start Adam's (and human's) dominion over earth.

There are people who reject the Bible and reject Christianity because the Bible is corrupted and contains many errors. Their decision is fully justified because the Bible indeed lost its authenticity, and was subjected to considerable corruptions as it was transmitted to us.

But is it justifiable to reject God and religion altogether?

This book has shown that the Qur'an is different from the Bible. It is fully preserved; and it is God Himself Who promised to preserve it. It has zero errors either in transmission or due to translation. All the accounts of creation in the Qur'an have been shown to either conform to scientific knowledge, or, precede it.

Thus, to make a judgment about God and religion, one must consult the Qur'an, the last revelation from God.

Appendix A

History of Compilation of the Qur'an

History of compilation of the Qur'an and to the factors that guaranteed its authenticity.¹⁶⁷

1. The language of the Qur'an is Arabic. It should be read and recited in Arabic. There are many translations of the meanings of the Qur'an in different languages, but these are not considered 'translated Qur'an', they are merely translations of the meanings of the Qur'an. What is meant by this is that when a Muslim reads the Qur'an in his prayers, he has to read it in Arabic, otherwise his prayers are not acceptable. Even for a non-Arabic-speaking Muslim, he has to memorize several Suras and verses from the Qur'an in Arabic to recite them in his prayers. It is interesting to note that the Qur'an is the only scripture that associates itself with a certain language. In the Qur'an we find 8 different verses in different Suras specifying that Arabic is the language of the Qur'an:

Verse 12:2,

إنا أنزلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون (يوسف 2).

"Indeed, We have sent it down as an Arabic Qur'an in order that you may understand." (Yusuf 2)

Verse 13:37,

وكذلك أنزلناه حكما عربيا ولئن اتبعت أهواءهم بعد ما جاءك من العلم ما لك من الله من ولي ولا واق. (الرعد 37).

"And thus We have revealed it (the Qur'an) as an Arabic legislation..." (Ar-Ra'd 37)

Verse 20:113,

وكذلك أنزلناه قرآنا عربيا وصرفنا فيه من الوعيد لعلهم يتقون أو يحدث لهم ذكرا. (طه 113).

¹⁶⁷ Al-Azami, M.M. (2003) - *The History of The Qur'anic Text from Revelation to Compilation; a Comparative Study with the Old and New Testaments*, UK Islamic Academy.

"And thus We have sent it down as a Qur'an in Arabic .." (Ta-Ha 113)

Verse 39:28,

قرأنا عربيا غير ذي عوج لعلهم يتقون. (الزمر 28).

"[It is] an Arabic Qur'an, without any deviance that they might become righteous .." (Az-Zumar 28)

Verse 41:3,

كتاب فصلت آياته قرآنا عربيا لقوم يعلمون. (فصلت 3).

"A Book whose verses have been detailed, an Arabic Qur'an for a people who know," (Fussilat 3)

Verse 42:7,

وكذلك أوحينا إليك قرآنا عربيا لتنذر أم القرى ومن حولها وتنذر يوم الجمع لا ريب فيه فريق في الجنة وفريق في السعير. (الشورى 7).

"And thus We have revealed to you (O Muhammad) a Qur'an in Arabic .." (Ash-Shura 7)

Verse 43:3,

إنا جعلناه قرآنا عربيا لعلكم تعقلون. (الزخرف 3).

"Indeed, We have made it a Qur'an in Arabic that you might understand." (Az-Zukhruf 3)

And Verse 46:12.

ومن قبله كتاب موسى إماما ورحمة وهذا كتاب مصدق لسانا عربيا لينذر الذين ظلموا وبشرى للمحسنين. (الأحقاف 12).

"And before this was the Scripture of Musa (Moses) as a guide and a mercy. And this is a confirming Book (the Qur'an) in an Arabic tongue, .." (Al-Ahqaf 12)

The Arabic language in which the Qur'an was revealed 1400 years ago is the same Arabic language that is in use today. Therefore, unlike the Bible, the Qur'an never suffered from the alterations and corruptions associated with translating a text that was revealed into an old extinct language to an intermediate language; and then more translation(s) from the intermediate language(s) to modern languages.

2. The practice of memorizing the Qur'an by heart is perhaps the most important factor that ensured the preservation of the Qur'an. Islam teachings encourage the memorization of the Qur'an; those who memorize the whole Qur'an are promised the highest places in the paradise.
3. The Qur'an was revealed piecemeal to Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) over the duration of his mission which extended over a 23-years period. The Muslims around the Prophet (called Companions) used to memorize the Qur'an as it was revealed. Although over the first 13 years of Prophet Muhammad's mission, only a few of the people of Makkah followed him (several hundreds), but toward the end of his mission Islam prevailed over the Arabic Peninsula, and the number of Companions is estimated to be over 100,000 Muslims. So, one can estimate the number of hafizoon by the time of the death of the Prophet (in 632CE) to be several thousands.
4. The Qur'an is recited in the five daily prayers that are compulsory on the Muslim. Additionally, the teachings of Islam encourage the Muslim to read and recite the Qur'an regularly as an act of worship. A typical Muslim may read the whole Qur'an over one month, but more religious people or Muslim scholars usually read the whole Qur'an once every week (or even in less time). This ensures that the Qur'an will not fade in the memories of the hafizoon.
5. During the month of Ramadan the Muslims gather to perform two special prayers. The Taraweeh is performed after Isha' prayer, and is conducted over the whole month of Ramadan. Every night one part (of thirty) of the Qur'an is recited in the Taraweeh, so the whole Qur'an is recited over the 30 days of the month. The other special prayer is the Tahajjud, and it is performed after midnight over the last ten days of the month. Some mosques recite the whole Qur'an in the Tahajjud prayers, but, most of the mosques manage to recite only one third or one half of it
6. The practice of memorizing the Qur'an by heart has been going unstoppped from the time of the Prophet till this day. Nowadays, in all Muslim countries (and even in the Muslim communities in non-

Muslim countries) you find mosques or schools that offer programs for memorization of the Qur'an. These can be extensive programs where the student can memorize the whole Qur'an in six months, or regular programs where he can do it in 2-3 years. In addition to the above, there are special religious schools to prepare and graduate a certified hafiz. In such schools, the student learns the Qur'an from a certified Master Teacher (Shaikh), who acquired his knowledge from a certified Master Teacher, .. in an 'unbroken chain' going all the way back to a Master Teacher from the Companions of the Prophet. After mastery is achieved and the recitation checked for lack of errors, the student is granted a formal license (called Ijaza) certifying that he/she has mastered the memorization of the whole Qur'an and that he/she was precise in following the rules of recitation (Tajweed), and is qualified to teach the Qur'an to other people.

7. In many Muslim countries there are annual competitions for the hafizoon. In such a competition the contestant proficiency is tested by asking him/her to recite the Qur'an starting from a certain verse in a certain sura that were selected randomly. Each contestant is given a score based on the quality of his memorization and Tajweed.
8. The critical period to any religion is the first few years after the death of its prophet or messenger. If the followers of the prophet were strong they can preserve his teachings; if, on the other hand, they were weak and on the run, the prophet's teachings could be suppressed and corrupted. Unlike many prophets before him, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) accomplished his mission 100%. By the time of his death, Islam was well established, and almost all of the Arabian Peninsula accepted Islam. In other word, Islam and Muslims were strong; they were not on the run. Actually, in the next thirty years after the death of the Prophet, the Muslim armies were conquering the neighboring nations, and Islam witnessed its greatest expansion. The enemies of Islam at that time had no chance to corrupt the Qur'an.
9. Writing was not a common skill among the Arabs at the time of the Prophet. But, every Companion of the Prophet who knew how to write used to write whatever he memorized of the Qur'an on any

available material to him: leather parchments, palm leaves, pieces of wood, animal bones, flat rocks, .. (paper was not invented at that time). So, it is a definite fact that by the time of the Prophet death the Qur'an was recorded in writing on thousands of pieces of different writing materials.

10. The Prophet selected many of his Companions and assigned them as official scribes for himself. The scribes' job was to record the Qur'an in writing and to write the letters of the Prophet to other leaders . There are different accounts to the number of those scribes; but the estimates from different sources are that their numbers was between 43 to 65 scribes. Therefore, although the Muslims at the time of the Prophet did not need a written copy of the Qur'an for they memorize it by heart, the Qur'an existed in written form at the time of the Prophet.
11. The first compilation of the Qur'an in written form was done by the first Caliph, Abu Bakr Al-Siddiq whose reign lasted 2 years (11H-13H/632-634CE). He appointed Zaid bin Thabit (one of the official scribes of the Prophet) to head a committee whose task was the compilation of the Qur'an and producing a written version (Mus'haf) of the Qur'an. The work started in Year 12H (633CE); i.e. in the following year after the death of the Prophet (pbuh). The committee task included collecting all the scattered recordings from the Companions of the Prophet. The Mus'haf (Qur'an book) was then reviewed and authenticated by the proficient hafizoon in Medina. This Mus'haf was kept with Abu Bakr, the first Caliph. At that time there was no need to make copies of the written Mus'haf because everyone recites the Qur'an from memory with an abundance of Hafizoon in the society. After the death of Abu Bakr, the Mus'haf was transferred to Umar bin al-Khattab, the second Caliph. After the death of Umar, the Mus'haf was kept with Hafsa bint Umar, the daughter of Umar and one of the wives of the Prophet.
12. By the time of the third Caliph, Uthman bin Affan (23AH-35AH/644-656CE), Islam had reached north Africa and the center of Asia, and many non-Arabs are becoming Muslims. The need was finally felt for written copies of the Qur'an to ensure that the new Muslims read and

recite the Qur'an properly without errors. Uthman requested Hafsah to send him the manuscript of the Qur'an which was in her safekeeping, and ordered the production of several bounded copies of it. This task was entrusted to 4 of the prominent Companions: Zaid ibn Thabit, Abdullah ibn Az-Zubair, Sa'eed ibn Al-'as, and Abdur-Rahman ibn Harith ibn Hisham. Upon the completion of their tasks (in 25AH/646CE), Uthman returned the original manuscript to Hafsah. The copies of the Mus'haf were again authenticated by the hafizoon in Medinah, and then they were sent to the major Islamic provinces. A copy of those Masa'hif (pl. of Mus'haf) is what is known as The Uthmanic Mus'haf (Mus'haf of Uthman), and is the original source of the Mus'haf we have between our hands nowadays. Many people make a mistake by thinking that Uthman was the first person to compile the Qur'an in year 25H (646CE); where in fact what Uthman did was generating copies of the Mus'haf that was compiled by Abu Bakr in year 12H (633CE), one year after the death of the Prophet (pbuh).

13. One of the copies sent out by the Caliph Uthman is still in existence today. It lies in the Museum of the City of Tashkent in Uzbekistan, Central Asia. This manuscript, held by the Muslim Board of Uzbekistan, is the earliest existent written version of the Qur'an. Also, a duplicate of the copy of the Mus'haf sent to Syria exists in the Topkapi Museum in Istanbul.

Internet Resources

I- Bible Search:

<https://biblegateway.com/>

<https://biblehub.com/>

<https://bible.knowing-jesus.com/>

<https://blueletterbible.org/>

II- Qur'an & Sunnah Translation & Search:

<https://noblequran.com/>

<https://quran.ksu.edu.sa/>

<https://qurancomplex.gov.sa/kfggpc-quran-translate-english/>

<https://surahquran.com/>

<http://tanzil.net>

<https://sunnah.com/>

III- Miracles in the Qur'an:

<https://harun-yahya.net/>

https://www.miraclesofthequran.com/site_map.html

<https://kaheel7.net/?lang=en>

<https://en.fussilat.org/>

<https://nabulsi.com/web/en>

<https://quran-m.com/>

<http://www.eajaz.org/>

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